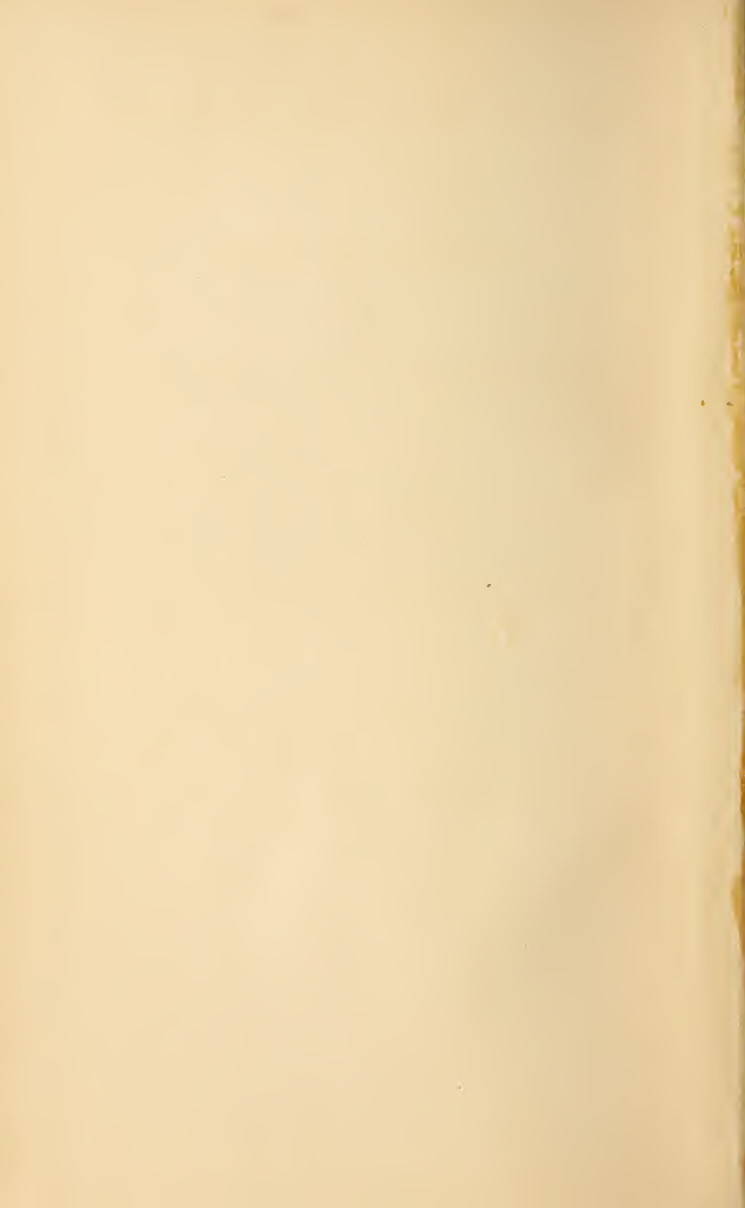


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THE STUDY CLASS

A Guide for the Student

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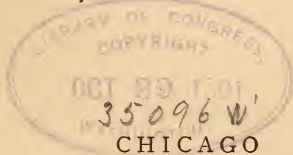
ENGLISH LITERATURE

BY

ANNA BENNESON McMAHAN

"

The use of literature is to afford us a platform whence we may command a view of our present life, a purchase by which we may move it. — EMERSON.



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TO

MRS. ADELAIDE HASTINGS WOOD,

WITH AFFECTION AND GRATITUDE.



PREFACE.

THIS book has grown out of a series of privately printed "Outlines," some of which have been in use for over five years. These have been issued from time to time in recognition of two notable, though nearly new, features of modern life : First, the great zeal and impetus for study among women throughout the country, expressing itself chiefly through the organization of study clubs ; and, second, the vast amount of such zeal going to waste through misdirected efforts and the lack of efficient leadership. Educational resources offered no provision for these groups of women of mature years and busy lives, whose school-days were long past, and whose only incitement was from within. The subjects and methods fitted to the high school or university did not fit

the woman's club, since generally its members were those who snatched from commonplace and continuous cares only an occasional hour for study. Chatauqua and the societies for the encouragement of home study were scarcely more helpful; for while indeed offering many suggestions for courses of reading and text-book lessons, they took almost no account of the deeper needs of the new movement. The common impulse that drew these women together was not so much a wish to acquire facts, as a seeking for knowledge that should in some way issue in life, in character, in the *power to think and to express the thought*. This, then, was the problem: to provide something that should stir dormant faculties into life, that should awaken the mental powers and furnish a clew to the relative values of things past and present in literature and in life, for the use of persons whom one had never seen, and with whom one must communicate from a distance. This, briefly stated, was the underlying purpose from which, by a process of evolution unnecessary to describe, has grown a circle of classes by correspondence, too large to be conducted longer by means of separate letters and privately printed pamphlets.

Nearly all of the study-schemes included in the present volume have been used by one or another of these correspondence classes; each scheme is divided into thirty outline topics, to accord with the average number of club meetings in a year. Thus the one hundred and fifty topics provide for a five years' course, but the order in which the subjects occur may be varied at the option of the student; their present arrangement is not intended to prescribe any "true order of studies" applicable to all cases, but represents an order that has been found least difficult for beginners and most likely to tempt to further study. Each of the schemes is complete in itself; all, however, belong to the same field, — namely, English Literature.

If some justification seems to be needed for adding one more to the already long list of works dealing with this theme, it may be found in the fact that these "Outlines" concern themselves with literature itself rather than with the history of literature. In general, their questions can only be answered by *direct* study of the author in hand, being of a kind not to be settled by the cyclopædia or the school manual. They aim to look somewhat closely at a few great works rather than to marshal a long list of names and

titles ; to fix the attention on the writings themselves rather than on what has been said about these writings ; to stimulate individual study and to develop the critical faculty by personal examination of an author's text rather than to collect gossip about the man himself or to rest content with judgments at second hand, however distinguished the authority. In carrying out this plan the classification has been based on affinity in kind rather than on sequence of time. The relative merits of a given work are only to be determined by reference to those of like nature with itself. Within these separate departments, however, the chronological method has been followed, comparative studies being also introduced for the sake of emphasizing the different characteristics of a given class of writings at different epochs.

The studies are arranged under five general divisions with subjects as follows : SHAKESPEARE, THE ENGLISH DRAMA, ENGLISH POETRY, ROBERT BROWNING, THE ENGLISH ESSAY. Within these will be found nearly every writer of note in English literature from the days of Elizabeth to our own, with the exception of the writers of prose fiction ; the addition of THE ENGLISH NOVEL may be expected at a future time.

Although correspondence must of necessity be inferior to personal conference, by just so much as letters fall below conversation as a means of inspiration, yet that it may result in developing an always delightful, often stimulating, and sometimes truly scholarly and original interchange of thought is a fact which has been amply proved by these five years of experience. In order as far as possible to reproduce the conditions of such correspondence, a few letters treating of the subjects on which the author's advice has been most often sought are prefixed to the study-schemes; and each group of "Outlines" is preceded by a chapter bearing on the special matter in hand.

The present volume stands for a belief that what has proved useful to the few may be welcomed by a larger public; may even be acceptable in the class-room of those institutions for the higher education where it begins to be recognized that although means for the study of the history of literature are ample, the helps to the study of literature itself are yet few and inadequate.



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THE STUDY CLASS.



I.

CONCERNING CHOICE OF SUBJECT.

THE best educated mind is not the one which is in possession of the largest number of facts ; it is the mind which is most capable of examining a subject, of forming its own opinions concerning it, and of understanding its relations to other subjects in literature and in life. If we desire to attain this mental power, what class of studies shall we choose as best helpers on our way? Shall we embrace science? Science, it is urged, deals with certainties ; it brings facts, and renounces guess-work ; it lays down rules that are of immense importance to the individual and to the race at large ; it explains the laws and forces

amid which we live every day, and is indeed our only exact knowledge.

Granting all that may be claimed for the importance of science as a practical guide for the care of our bodies and our houses, our cities and our farms, it is still true that there are large sections of human life — and those the sections which most shape the daily conduct, the entire moral, affectionate, spiritual nature of man — with which science has nothing to do, except very indirectly. On the questions that concern man's greatest interests — the questions that reach into man's deepest life as a social, ethical, loving, rational creature — science is for the most part silent. True, there is in this regard considerable difference in the different branches of science. The superior sciences, like astronomy and geology, widen the outlook more than the experimental sciences ; meteorology inspires more than mineralogy ; physiology more than chemistry. But the most that science can do is to deal with the questions of physical existence, with the forces of the material world. Not any theory of the outward universe, however scientifically established, is going to solve life's deepest questions. Indeed, one of the greatest dangers of scientific study is its tendency to *narrow* the vision. Even Huxley confesses, " It looks as if the scientific, like other revolutions, meant to

devour its own children ; as if the growth of science tended to overwhelm its votaries ; as if the men of science of the future were condemned to diminish into narrower specialists as time goes on. I do not think any such catastrophe a necessary consequence of the growth of science, but I do think it an evil to be provided against. The man who works away at one corner of nature, shutting his eyes to all the rest, diminishes his chance of seeing what is to be seen in that corner."

For these reasons, scientific studies do not seem to me the best choice for the aims we have in view ; for, however valuable the exact sciences may be to the progress of civilization, they are not the means best fitted to move the mind into action and to develop the mental grasp we wish to acquire.

Shall we then turn to history and walk in her paths? A leading modern historian defines history as the study of man, — of the workings of man's nature as carried out in political society. But to become historians in this high sense presupposes large powers of insight, of comparison, even of imagination ; the very qualities which we have not, and which must be acquired by some simpler and more gradual approaches. Therefore, in general, history does not prove a stimulating study in the woman's club ; or, at

least, not unless its members are already considerable students, with judgment, sensibility, and imagination sufficiently cultivated to enter into the spirit of past men and past generations and to realize that, as Freeman puts it, "History is past politics, and politics present history." With any less equipment, historical study is pretty sure to mean a mere accumulation of dates and names, and the student finds herself no whit furthered in the power of sustained and accurate thinking.

Some may protest here, "Why attempt to draw these distinctions between different classes of study? How can you hope to prescribe any one as *best*, when people differ so much in taste and acquirement?" I admit the difficulty. It is true that people differ so widely in quality of mind and in natural gifts that some will be drawn more to one pursuit and others to another. Nature is the best guide; and always one who is called to a given pursuit will do better work by following that than by attempting any other. But, looking as we are now, for something which shall stir dormant faculties into life, which shall awaken the mental powers and furnish a clew to the relative values of things past and present, I have no hesitation in giving the preference to literature, above all other studies. In literature, the master minds of each genera-

tion have expressed the truths of life that they themselves felt and knew. Books are the outcome of enriched and mellow minds ; they are the fruit of thought with "imagination all compact ;" they are not made, they grow ; they are written, usually, because their authors could not resist the pressure from within to take the pen in hand. The great books belong to no local sphere ; their universality addresses itself to the minds and hearts of men everywhere, and they become the property of a race or of all mankind. "Faust," "The Divine Comedy," "Hamlet," — who cares in what small neighborhood they were written ? They belong to the whole world ; and the reason is, that their authors embodied not merely the transient thoughts and feelings of their time, but their conception and grasp of universal life. Hence they have a message for all time ; and hence, too, they are the studies best fitted to awaken the forces hidden away in the mind, to arouse the sensibility which is worth so much more than mere acquisition.

It is not within my present purpose to name any one or two books as absolutely the best ; to insist upon any certain programme either in Emerson or Shakespeare or Browning or Carlyle or Goethe ; but I do urge the study of masterpieces in literature, because through these we are led to deal with the great questions


of man's relation to the universe in which he finds himself, and because, in the words of Emerson, "The use of literature is to afford us a platform whence we may command a view of our present life, a purchase by which we may move it."





II.

CONCERNING METHOD IN STUDY.

O beginners in study, there are two words which need often to be reiterated, — *simplicity* and *thoroughness*. The programme should be simple in scope, but thorough within that scope. Take some one subject, — it matters not so much what one, provided it be selected with reference to the time you propose to spend, and to your mental capacity ; learn that thoroughly, and you will have gained just so much of equipment for all studies whatsoever. Those were wise words spoken by Professor Sonnenschein to the students of Mason College, Birmingham : —

“ There is something in the consecration of all the faculties to a limited field that braces the mind and gives it intellectual grip. . . .

“ Let me compare the mind to a house with many windows. For a vital comprehension of

truth, I would prefer to look through one window thoroughly cleaned, than through all of them half-purified from the obscuring medium of error and prejudice. To the young student, especially, I would say, 'Clean one of your windows; be not content until there is one branch of your subject — if it be only the branch of a branch — which you understand as thoroughly as you are capable of understanding it, until your sense of truth is satisfied and you have intellectual conviction.' Be assured that in learning this one thing, you will have added an eye to your mind, an instrument to your thought, and partially have learned many things. . . . Doubtless it would be a grand thing to have a knowledge of all the great objects of human contemplation; but we must recognize the limitations of our nature, and renounce the impossible.

"On the other hand, we may console ourselves with the reflection that one subject deeply studied involves the examination of others. No man can thoroughly probe a difficult question of law without coming upon problems of morals, politics, and religion; no one can carry his researches into language far, without solving, on the way, many a question of logic and even metaphysics. In this way one science leads ever to another; and the specialist is not so

incomplete as he is sometimes supposed to be. His knowledge stretches itself out in many directions, like the branches of a tree, which spring from a single trunk and are centred in it. Still, no man can be a master of all sciences."

That this is exactly the reverse of the methods common among clubs, no one will deny who is familiar with the situation. As a rule, the main object seems to be to cover the largest possible field. If the subject be history, the programme will include several centuries and many nations; if literature, then a dozen or twenty authors will be set down, — all for one winter. Recently, in a club where it was proposed to enter upon a study of Browning by giving one year's work to it, it was objected, "What! give a whole year to one poet? Why not have one essay on Browning, one on Wordsworth, one on Tennyson, and so on?" When we consider the amount of reading, of concentration, of brooding thought, requisite to the preparation of any essay in the least degree individual, or one which shall be anything more than a neat patchwork from the encyclopædia and Poole's Index, it is apparent what were the ideals of that club. I hold in my hand the programme of another club whose oldest member has not yet reached twenty years, and where "Browning" does thus actually appear

as one among other literary subjects, — the others being “Gladstone,” “Hans Sachs,” etc.

Now, not only is this a waste of time, but it unfits for any real brain-work. The mind is “tattooed all over with masses of fact,” but there is no real growth. People fancy they are studying when in fact they are weakening and frittering away the mental fibre ; they are fostering the charlatan’s pride of boasted knowledge instead of the scholar’s grace of humility.

I know the other side of the question. I do not forget the German scholar who died regretting that he had undertaken to master the Greek language instead of concentrating on the dative case ; nor Holmes’s scarabæist, who devoted himself to beetles, and counted the general entomologist as necessarily a humbug. But women’s clubs are too far away from such tendencies to need any warning of this danger.

Suppose then this one single line of interest to be adopted ; suppose, for example, Shakespeare is the topic. The genuine way, the scholar’s way, would be to begin with a careful study of the text of some one play, proceeding to others only when this is somewhat understood. But is this the club way ? By no means ; this is not half high-sounding enough. Let us have for a beginning three essays ; let us call them (I refer to the printed programme of one

of our clubs) "Classic Drama," "Romantic Drama," "Shakespeare's Place in Literature." In the name of all that is honest, what can a company who have never read a Greek drama, who are beginners only in Shakespeare, do with such subjects as these? Compare with such pretension the confession of Mr. Frank Marshall that he had been studying "Hamlet" for fourteen years, and then found out how little he knew about it; or Professor Hudson's modest disclaimer: "I have been studying Hamlet more than forty years, — studying him with such small powers of thought as I had. . . . I have learned by experience that one seems to understand him better after a little study than after a great deal; and that the less one sees into him, the more apt one is to think he sees through him, — in which respect he is indeed like Nature herself."

It is gratifying to note a tendency toward simplicity in the programmes of some of the older clubs, but it would be encouraging to see a more rapid progress in this better way. For example, a programme constructed in the spirit of Ruskin when he says, "Teach or preach or labor as you will, everlasting difference is set between one man's capacity and another's. . . . This mental supremacy is incommunicable, . . . and nearly the best thing that men can generally do is to set themselves, not to the attainment,

but the discovery, of this ; learning to know gold when we see it from iron-glance, and diamonds from flint-sand, being for most of us a more profitable employment than trying to make diamonds out of our own charcoal."

A word concerning the number of persons who can join in a class profitably. The average club is too large. For genuine study fifteen is a very large number ; ten or even less is better. To all new clubs I would say, Limit yourselves to a small membership ; to the old clubs, who cannot do this, Form study-groups, bringing the results if you like into the larger body, but do not attempt to "carry" it all.





III.

THE INTERPRETATION OF LITERATURE.



CONSIDERABLE uncertainty exists in some minds concerning the true meaning of the study of literature. Therefore, let us distinguish between right and wrong conceptions of what constitutes its intrinsic value, between right and wrong methods of approach to it as a liberal study.

At the outset, let us rid ourselves of a considerable body of traditions, inherited from school-days. English literature, as we then studied it, meant a barren catalogue of names, works, and dates; its masterpieces, if studied at all, were considered only as so much material for exercises in grammar, syntax and etymology; groups of writers were told off according to their "general characteristics," and marked with labels which, being readily committed to memory, were as readily forgotten long ago. The conception

of literature as the expression of art or genius, as being charged with a message which it was ours to master and assimilate, had not then found its way into the schools, nor has it yet come to general recognition there, though it is to be found in some instances under the leadership of an occasional enlightened and independent teacher.

Thus it happens that our first duty in approaching literature is to discard the old notions ; regarding it neither as a collection of facts for the memory, nor merely as material for the study of words and phrases, but rising to the higher conception of literature as an expression of the truths of life and the world, as seen by the master minds of each generation. To grasp these truths will tax the highest arts of interpretation, — not merely the art of verbal analysis, nor yet alone the art of analysis of form and style, but also the still higher art of analysis of sentiment, ethic, and thought.

Every work of art, be it picture or statue, or melody or writing, has in it some central principle of life ; just as every man whose life is life in any true sense of the word, and not a mere affair of chance, of impulse, of moods or accidents, has in him some central principle of life which animates and controls his words and acts. I know that I am taking issue with a very popu-

lar doctrine. The doctrine of art for art's sake alone—that is, for the production of a fine piece of work, no matter whether in carving a cherry-stone or in painting a madonna—has been preached long enough to corrupt the taste and even the morals of the whole reading community. The writer, it is now insisted, must be concerned with no other end than to portray his subject accurately and vividly, no matter whether the subject be eagle or reptile, saint or brute. To realize where these shallow theories are leading, we have only to look at a large part of current fiction. Whole pages and infinite pains are given to evolving the last psychological depths of the intimations given in the way some weakling ties his cravat, or some frivolous maid gathers her shawl about her shoulders. It is excellent art, but it is art so wretchedly misapplied that it can hardly be called literature.

No, art is not for its own sake, it is for man's sake ; and it ought further to be for the brightest and best, and not for the most trivial in man. No man can write a book that amounts to anything, without a purpose. Indeed, a man of genius is always a man of desperate intensity of purpose. When Shakespeare portrayed Macbeth, he meant blasted ambition and murder ; when Shylock, — avarice overreaching itself ; when Iago, — cold-blooded infamy. He did not say

so to himself, but he looked to it that the reader should.

If you will grant me, then, this central, informing thought in every work, I urge that we must not be satisfied unless we master it. There may and probably will be ornaments and illustrations, just as the tree-trunk puts forth branches and leaves ; and your analysis will include these also, — but recognized as secondary, and in their proper relations to the main thought.

This would seem to be a point so self-evident as to render emphasis superfluous ; but experience shows that nothing is harder than to get students in the way of analyzing what they read. A club that had been studying "Daniel Deronda" for many weeks were asked to bring in as a final exercise the motive of the work, as it lay in the mind of each member. The result was that some brought essays, others citations of favorite passages, others synopses of certain chapters, but not one true analysis of the motive or content of the work was produced. To make a synopsis is a different and much simpler matter than this of analysis. Almost any one, with a little attention, can give a fair *résumé* of the various points made by an author, following their original order ; but it may happen that a great thinker, either from deficiency of literary art, or from other cause, does not work up his

theme in any orderly progression, so that the enumeration of its points as they occur would yield no analytic description of its contents. Many of Emerson's essays illustrate this fact, owing to his method of composition, — his custom of putting all his stray thoughts into a common drawer, from which he drew forth on occasion whatever seemed to bear relation to the subject in hand. Thus, at first glance, much of Emerson appears to be mere *disjecta membra*, which yet, on closer inspection, is seen to have a unity, and unity of a very high kind. When people say that a writer is unintelligible, it often means that they do not wish to be at the pains to understand him. Now, it is idle to presume to read a book saturated with deep thinking without doing a little thinking ourselves, even if every great thinker (as is not always the case) had the gift of clear expression. The common outcry against Browning's obscurity is not without some foundation; yet a large part of the difficulties come from the fact that, as he says, he does not write his verses as a substitute for an after-dinner nap or cigar. He cannot be read in a wholly passive state of mind; to get to the interior of his meaning requires intellectual exertion. An eminent philosophical writer has said that when he first began to read Kant's "Critique," he found it took an hour or two to get

over a few lines ; but when he once got through Kant, he could read a dozen inferior books in a day. He had acquired a mental strength just as surely, and by the same law, as one acquires physical strength in the gymnasium. The thing of value is, not that one has leaped or turned some single bar, but that hereafter all other bars are more easily turned or leaped.

Therefore, let me repeat that no writing can be said to be truly grasped until it has been analyzed, either mentally or in writing. It will often be found that the essential points are summed up in notable sentences or clauses. Very systematic writers, like Higginson or John Fiske, have landing-places, so to speak, where they pause to glance back over the way they have travelled, or to indicate the nature of the rest of the journey. Such writers are very easy of analysis. But without such view-points, — and poetry is almost always without them, — we must make up for their absence by more alertness of attention, insight, and imagination. The more complex the work, — as for example in such a case as Goethe's "Faust," — the more prolonged and exacting the task, but also the more intense and delightful the thrill of discovery. Whoever has felt it will sympathize with Dowden's description : "The happiest moment in the hours of study of a critic of literature is

when seemingly by some divination, but really as the result of patient observation and thought, he lights upon the central motive of a great work. Then, of a sudden, order begins to form itself from the crowd and chaos of his impressions and ideas. There is a moving hither and thither, a grouping or co-ordinating of all his recent experiences, which goes on of its own accord, and every instant his vision becomes clearer, and new meanings disclose themselves in what has been lifeless and unilluminated. It seems as if he could even stand by the artist's side and co-operate with him in the process of creating. With such a sense of joy upon him, the critic will think it no hard task to follow the artist to the sources from whence he drew his material, — it may be some dull chapter in an ancient chronicle, or some gross tale of passion by an Italian novelist, — and he will stand by and watch with exquisite pleasure the artist handling that crude material, refashioning and refining it, and breathing into it the breath of a finer life."

When we have thus gained entrance to the heart of an author by the doorway of one work, we may well undertake to find other ways through other works, and finally to inquire concerning his production as an organic whole, What was his relation to others before and after.

what was his own special mission, his own force as a part of the history of literature. This does not mean personal gossip, into which so many writers of text-books, and, alas! so many literary critics of good powers are prone to fall. Let me illustrate what the study of English literature should *not* be, by giving in full the questions relating to Sir Philip Sidney from a book very popular and much used among women's clubs:

1. Give some account of the life, character and attainments of Sir Philip Sidney.
2. What tragical event occurred during his residence in France?
3. Give the date of that event.
4. Of what country was he elected king?
5. Why did he not accept the crown?
6. Mention Sidney's prose works.
7. What estimate was placed upon them by his own age?
8. Which one is now most highly esteemed?
9. Had any prose fiction been written in English before Sidney wrote his?
10. How does he rank among the prose writers of his time?
11. In what kind of poetical composition did he excel?

The first thing that strikes us about these questions is that all may easily be answered by consulting any cyclopædia, and they make no

demand which shall require the student to read so much as a single line of Sidney's writing. The only faculty called into exercise is memory. There is nothing to encourage reflection, nothing which has the slightest tendency to cultivate the critical faculty, nothing which even hints at what constitutes the life and power of any one of Sidney's writings.

Suppose, in place of these unprofitable inquiries, we substitute questions which cannot be answered without a careful and critical study of Sidney's own utterances, — questions which demand knowledge at first-hand, and whose answers hinge upon the exercise of individual judgment and upon comparative study with other authors, also at first-hand. Let us take, for example, Sidney's "Defence of Poetry," and apply to it some such method as this : —

1. Discuss Sidney's definition of poetry. Offer a better, either original or quoted.

2. Discuss Sidney's canons of dramatic composition. Compare the state of the English Drama as described by him with its succeeding developments, and say how far these were the effect of a direct departure from Sidney's principles.

3. As an argument for the usefulness and supremacy of poetry, has the lapse of three centuries impaired the value of this essay?

4. Compare this earliest critical writing of importance on the Art of Poetry with such notable modern ones as those of Shelley, Emerson, and Matthew Arnold, and state how they differ or agree in their views of

(a) Rhyme or melody as a factor in poetry.

(b) Moral purpose in relation to art.

(c) Nature of poetic inspiration.

5. Sidney and the early writers, in classifying poetry, have much to say of the mould into which it is cast (as heroic, lyric, dramatic, etc.), — a classification commonly omitted by later writers. Reasons for this difference of treatment.

Not one of these questions, observe, can be answered in any parrot-fashion or without direct study of the masterpiece by the student himself, in the exercise of his own critical faculty and powers of comparison. Others might be added, looking toward the interpretation of the work on its historical side, through the general movement of the life and mind of the times ; but these should come later, and might involve more extensive libraries and greater expenditure of time and money than are available to most students. For such an undertaking as I have indicated, — namely, the interpretation of particular masterpieces of literature through critical study, — the means are fortunately open to every

one. All, or nearly all, the great classics of our language are available in cheap editions ; he who will may take counsel with the great ones of earth and learn what has been the message of each to mankind. For, as has been truly said, "If your study does not directly or indirectly enrich the life of man, it is but a drawing of vanity with cart-ropes, a weariness to the flesh, or at best, a busy idleness."





IV.

THE ART OF COMPOSITION.



HERE is no surer way of finding out exactly how much or how little one knows of a given subject than to attempt to write about it. Accordingly the writing of essays should have some part in every study, with due attention to certain important steps that must precede and attend the act of composition.

First, let us consider what place books may rightly occupy in the preparation. Richter has offered the maxim: "Never read till you have thought yourself empty; never write till you have read yourself full." I should accept this advice with certain reservations. I should wish to make a distinction between books according as they fall into the one or the other of two classes: *fact* books or *opinion* books. Books furnishing ready-made opinions, critical writings, are now so numerous and enticing that the

temptation to let them take the place of individual study is very great indeed. George Eliot, speaking of this subject, says: "Who learns to discriminate shades of color by considering what is expected of him? The habit of expressing borrowed judgments stupefies the sensibilities which are the only foundations of genuine judgment, just as the constant reading and retailing of results from other men's observations through the microscope, without ever looking through the lens oneself, is an instruction in some truths and some prejudices, but is no instruction in observant susceptibility; on the contrary, it breeds a habit of inward seeing according to verbal statement, which dulls the power of outward seeing according to visual evidence."

I agree with the writers quoted, that all books of this nature should follow, and not precede, individual study at first-hand. But there is another class of books—let us call them fact-books—which should not come under this sentence of postponement. They are the books which throw light on obscure allusions, inaccessible facts, contemporary conditions, or the books which are in any way collateral with the theme, and help to furnish the proper atmosphere for its understanding. Such books may go along with, or even precede, original study. For example, the student of Dante would be very foolish to deny

himself the light of Longfellow's notes, or to refuse the aid of such books as Scartazzini's "Hand-Book," or Mrs. Oliphant's "Makers of Florence." On the other hand, he will do well to refrain from Dante essays, such as Canon Farrar's, or Miss Blow's, or Harris' "Spiritual Sense of the Divina Commedia," — critical writings merely, — until after he has studied "The Divine Comedy" itself. So with Shakespeare. The notes explanatory of the text should go along with the text itself; the opinions of Hudson, Dowden, and Schlegel are of immense value, as they supplement, probably enlarging or modifying your own; but shun them until you are possessed of some of your own.

Next to books — indeed, some would say before books — comes conversation. The Chinese have a maxim, "A single conversation across the table with a wise man is better than ten years' mere study of books." If we cannot assent to this extreme statement of the Orientals, we shall all agree, I think, that discussion by different persons throws side-lights that can be gained in no other way. Therefore, I would say to all clubs, Cultivate conversation as a part of your programme. I say cultivate it, because it will no more come without cultivation than beautiful flowers will come out of untended soil, and because at present it is an art so much

neglected. Once begin to notice, and it seems astonishing how few persons possess the true conversational instinct. After listening to a paper, a considerable number of listeners may ask pertinent questions, and give out apt impressions, repeating that convenient phrase, "It seems to me," not oftener than every other sentence; but a company in which every one is on the alert to catch a kindred idea, say an àpropos thing, and pass it on to the next is a very rare sight indeed. "I do not call a woman cultivated," says Mallock, in "The New Republic," "who can merely ask me if I have read such and such a book, and say nothing about it." He might have gone still further and added, that even if she knew every fact and date and name, there would still be the mere frame-work of conversation; for without fine perceptions of relative values, and trained powers of discrimination, there is no genuine culture.

(If these preliminary steps have been diligently taken, — reading, individual brooding, conversation with others, — the process of composition will be comparatively easy.) Keep always in mind that the first aim of expression is clearness; the first question for every writer in every instance is to ask himself, "What, precisely, is the thought I wish to express?" Begin at the thought and

work out, rather than at the words and work in, lest perchance you find yourself swamped in mere words. \ The only way to learn to write well, as to learn to do anything well, is to do it, yet there are certain precepts, by no means new, which even the most practised writers need often to call to mind.

1. For the first one we may go back even so far as to that good old schoolmaster Roger Ascham, who enjoined his pupils, "To think as wise men do, and speak as common people do." How rare are the examples of such a beautiful simplicity ! It is a useful exercise for any one, after completing his first draft, to go over the whole manuscript carefully with this one thought in mind, — choice of words. If you find a long word, look at it with suspicion ; do not let it stand if there is a shorter or simpler one equally expressive of your meaning. Word-choosing fills a peculiarly important place in English composition, because English has a larger stock of words than any other language that ever existed in the world. To write English well, one must be completely in touch with the English vocabulary ; and by this process of self-examination you are making a highly useful philological study, adding to your vocabulary, and gaining a power to express shades of meaning. Think of the ridicule that a late President

of the United States would have escaped had he stopped to draw his pen through "innocuous desuetude" and to rewrite "harmless disuse."

2. Next to simplicity, study conciseness. Prolixity, either in thought or in expression, makes bad writing. Not to know the essential from the unessential, is simply not to know the matter in hand, and, therefore, to portray it falsely and ill. Pascal said of one of his letters, "I could have made it shorter if I could have kept it longer." A friend once prefaced a paper, saying, "If I had had more time, I should have written a great deal less." Few people, I fancy have not at some time been in a position to make a similar confession. Only great genius can delay till the last moment, write at white heat, and then hurry an essay before his audience. For ordinary mortals a much safer plan is to write long enough beforehand to let the paper get cold and the mind be diverted into other channels, so that the writer can, to a degree, approach the work as though it belonged to another person. Sometimes not only revision but entire rewriting will be necessary; nor would such a labor be without abundant precedent. Macaulay wrote and rewrote some of his essays, long as they were, three times over; George H. Lewes was one of the most thoughtful and careful of writers, yet he had

one of the first articles which he sent to the *Edinburgh Review* returned by the editor to be re-written all through; and the second edition was so far superior to the first that he never afterward sent his first copy to the press, but invariably wrote everything twice and sometimes three times before submitting it to editor or publisher.

3. But although conciseness be a great virtue, this need not exclude ornament. Illustration is often a happy means of enforcing and beautifying the thought. The concrete is always more vivid and picturesque than the abstract. Lowell says, "A metaphor is not an argument, though it be sometimes the gunpowder to drive one home and imbed it in the memory." Make sure, however, that such adornments grow naturally out of your subject; beware of seeking them only to fasten them on painfully. The joining seam will then mar your work more than your "purple patch" will adorn it.

4. In regard to quotations, do not hesitate to support your own opinion by the words of another, provided the expression be better than any possible to yourself, or provided you wish the weight of another's authority. Let these seem to grow naturally out of your subject, rather than that the quotation shall be the principal matter and your thought a dilution of it, or that there

should be any suspicion of the pedantry of showing familiarity with many high-sounding names.

5. Lessing used to say that a man is no more responsible for his literary style than for his nose. This would be true if the influences which go to forming a literary style, and they are many, were entirely at the mercy of chance. John Burroughs has told somewhere, that finding he was imitating Emerson's style in consequence of being under the spell of his thought, he turned sharply about and began to make and write those Nature studies by which he is now chiefly known, and in which he was forced to use a language of his own. Or, one may deliberately choose some master as his model, and study how he produces his effects for the express purpose of discipline according to the same rules. Helen Hunt Jackson took Higginson's "Outdoor Papers," trying to rewrite them, or to find if in any instance a word or phrase could be changed, studying them in this way over and over again. It has been said that most Londoners write like the *Times* editorials, that being the literature they chiefly read. Lowell says that the elder masters of English writing "lunched with Plutarch and supped with Plato," hence the dignity of their style.



V.

INTRODUCTORY TO THE STUDY OF SHAKESPEARE.

SHAKESPEARE'S plays began a new order and kind of literature. His rank rests not upon his being the child of a drama that came before him, but upon the fact that he is the father of a whole class that have come after him. Nor, indeed, shall we get much light even in this direction so long as we regard Shakespeare chiefly as *dramatist*, the main fact being, as Emerson says, that "he was a full man that liked to talk ;" that he became dramatist simply because, for the moment, the drama was "ballad, epic, newspaper, caucus, lecture, Punch, and library at the same time ;" and that to take account of form where such wisdom of life is in question is "like making a question concerning the paper on which a king's message is written."

Looking at Shakespeare from this high point

of view, — regarding his writings not as plays, but as expressions of his mind and art, — we find in him this supreme purpose, *to depict life*. Shakespeare enters into the position and feelings of his creations in order that he may portray the motive and life of a soul. The inward, not the outward life is the theme ; character, not events ; and the movement and issue depend upon what *that soul* evolves from the conditions in which it is placed. Nothing like this had ever been before essayed ; but a motive so noble, joined to so great power in its execution, has been sufficient to give the tone to all imaginative writing since ; so that the words here used as descriptive of his work express also the aims of all later fiction, the difference between him and his successors being a difference in power, in method, and, more especially, in *form*, but never a difference in motive. It is not necessary here to dwell upon the various causes that have conspired to bring about a change of form, or to explain why prose fiction in books supplies to the modern mind the same place that acted drama did to the mind of the sixteenth century. The point is, that to Shakespeare it is due that human life was for the first time set in its rightful place as a study of supreme moment ; that in the study of Shakespeare the most important matter is to treat his plays as life-problems, his

characters as human beings like ourselves, moved to the same laughter and tears, thrilled by the same passions, yielding to the same temptations, triumphing over the same obstacles, crushed by the same misfortunes.

Accordingly, the following studies will concern themselves with attempts at establishing a chronological order, very little ; with endeavors to piece out the character of the writer from his creations, still less ; with textual controversies, not at all ; with questions of vocabulary and syntax, only so far as may be necessary to a clear understanding of the meaning.

Coleridge has said that "to judge aright, and with distinct consciousness of the grounds of our judgment, concerning the works of Shakespeare, implies the power and the means of judging rightly all other works of intellect, those of abstract science alone excepted." Let us consider what faculties must be applied to the undertaking. It is obvious that the dramatic form makes very large demands upon the reader, by calling upon him to supply much that would be supplied for him by the narrative or epic form ; it demands from him not only a much closer *attention*, so that no hint, or touch, or word escape him, not only much more *reflection* in order that he may interpret the significance of these as indications of character, but also an-

other exercise of the mind, *imagination*, in order to fill in the gaps and determine the unknown from the known. He must himself construct the physical, mental, and spiritual traits, much as a naturalist must from a dry bone reconstruct the living, moving frame of the animal of which he has had no sight; but with this difference, that while naturalists of equal knowledge will agree in their animal, scarcely any two persons will agree entirely in their Macbeth or Hamlet or Lear, owing to the variable quality of the imagination which recreates them.

Every play, after due attention and reflection, reveals itself as a skeleton, whose substance is known by these signs: —

1. The words and acts of each character, always bearing in mind the circumstances and motives which may color and modify his sincerity of speech and action.

2. The light in which each is regarded by others, bearing in mind *their* individual bias as modifiers of their judgments.

3. The author's own view so far as may be gathered from the whole course of the play, — just as in real life we judge a man from his general course of action, habit of mind, and modes of expression.

Availing ourselves, then, of such things as these, — using them as legitimate materials for

interpretation by the individual imagination, — let us first apply ourselves to the play alone, reading carefully by acts and scenes, and discussing freely in the class meeting, but always remembering that the questions are not to be considered as exhaustive or exclusive, but rather merely as suggestive of fruitful lines of inquiry.

Only *after* this preliminary reading and discussion, shall we consult the critics and actors ; their opinions are of immense value as modifying or supplementing our own, but we must take care that they are not allowed to *supplant* our own. At the conclusion of each play, some inquiry into its sources and bibliography may seem to bring us somewhat in touch with the man and the artist ; and, finally, we shall do well to present on paper our conceptions of the characters as they have fixed themselves in our minds.

In a list like the following, limited to five plays, the difficulty has been to make a choice. The selection as it stands has been made less with reference to the presentation of the absolutely best, about which there would be much difference of opinion, than with reference to the exhibition of the chief varieties, — thus serving to illustrate the fitness of that appellation bestowed by Coleridge and perpetuated by the common consent of mankind, the *myriad-minded* Shakespeare.



VI.

OUTLINES OF THE STUDY OF SHAKESPEARE.

ROLFE'S and Hudson's editions of the single plays are recommended as the ones most helpful and convenient for the use of the student. "The Merchant of Venice," "Hamlet" and "Macbeth," are issued in the Furness Variorum Edition, and are masterpieces of complete and comprehensive editing. For information about Shakespeare, his mind and art, the best single book in small compass is Dowden's Shakespeare Primer ; Fleay's Shakespeare Manual is also very valuable.

The references to acts and scenes in these Outlines follow the line numberings of Rolfe, this being the edition commonly preferred by students.

TOPICS.

- I. A Midsummer-Night's Dream, Act I.
- II. A Midsummer-Night's Dream, Act II.
- III. A Midsummer-Night's Dream, Act III.
- IV. A Midsummer-Night's Dream, Acts IV. and V.
- V. A Midsummer-Night's Dream. General Résumé.
- VI. Julius Cæsar, Act I.
- VII. Julius Cæsar, Act II. Scene 1.
- VIII. Julius Cæsar, Act II. Scenes 2, 3, 4, and Act III.
Scene 1.
- IX. Julius Cæsar, Act III. Scenes 2 and 3.
- X. Julius Cæsar, Acts IV. and V.
- XI. Merchant of Venice, Act I.
- XII. Merchant of Venice, Act II.
- XIII. Merchant of Venice, Act III.
- XIV. Merchant of Venice, Act IV.
- XV. Merchant of Venice, Act V.
- XVI. Merchant of Venice. Summary.
- XVII. Macbeth, Act I.
- XVIII. Macbeth, Act II.
- XIX. Macbeth, Act III.
- XX. Macbeth, Act IV.
- XXI. Macbeth, Act V.
- XXII. Macbeth. The Supernatural Element.
- XXIII. Macbeth. Summary.
- XXIV. Hamlet, Act I.
- XXV. Hamlet, Act II.
- XXVI. Hamlet, Act III.
- XXVII. Hamlet, Act IV.
- XXVIII. Hamlet, Act V.
- XXIX. Hamlet. General Résumé.
- XXX. Shakespeare's Art and Place in Literature.

TOPIC I.

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM, ACT I.

I. DIFFICULT OR DOUBTFUL PASSAGES.

Scene. Line.

1. 15. Explain "companion," as used here.
1. 16, 17. Explain "I woo'd thee with my sword," etc.
Give some account of the exploits of Theseus as related in Grecian mythology.
1. 50, 51. Explain "Within his power to leave the figure," etc.
1. 110. Explain "spotted."
1. 170. Explain "best arrow."
2. 4. Explain the nature of *interludes*, and the custom of the day in respect to them.
2. 22, 33. Explain the allusions to "Ercles."

II. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. Shakespeare's dramas commonly follow two rules: — (1) They foreshadow in the first scene of the first act, the main idea of the plot; (2) They introduce all the principal characters before the close of the first act. Applying these tests to the present case, what should you expect concerning the characters of this play; and in whom should you suppose the interest would centre?

2. Had Shakespeare any special reason for paying tribute to "single blessedness" (Sc. 1, l. 74-78)?

3. One of Shakespeare's arts was his masterly choice of words to heighten the effect he wished to produce. Point out any instances in this act of the skilful use of adjectives for such a purpose.

4. Usages of the time in respect to female parts on the stage, as shown by the cast of characters in Scene 2.

5. History of the play; when written, probably, and for what occasion; before whom acted: when printed, and in what form.

6. Did Shakespeare draw his knowledge of Theseus and Hercules from the classics or from romance? These characters have been called "the knights-errant of antiquity." Fitness of this seemingly anomalous description?

TOPIC II.

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM, ACT II.

I. DIFFICULT OR DOUBTFUL PASSAGES.

Scene. Line.

I. 8, 10. Comment on, —

"To dew her *orbs* upon the green,
The cowslips *tall* her *pensioners* be."

- 88, 117. What season in England corresponded with this description, and how does it help to fix the date of writing?

I. 98. What was the "nine men's morris"?

I. 145-61. What celebrated festivities probably alluded to here?

I. 165. What flower is meant by the "love-in-idleness"?

I. Explain the following words: *lob* (16), *quern* (36), *neeze* (56), *ringlets* (86), *pelt-ing* (91), *wode* (189).

II. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION.

I. The elves of English folk-lore had distinctive characteristics, to the popular notion of which Shakespeare conformed. What do you learn of them in the

following respects, quoting passages from this act in evidence?

- a.* Size.
- b.* Power of invisibility and of assuming various forms.
- c.* Favorite haunts.
- d.* The fairy-rings.
- e.* Love of music.
- f.* Swiftmess of motion.
- g.* Mischievous sports.
- h.* Changelings.

(See Dyer's "Folk-Lore of Shakespeare," Chap. I.)

2. Give some account of the traditions concerning Robin Goodfellow. (See Jonson's ballad in Percy's "Reliques of Ancient Poetry.")

3. Some account of Oberon, and origin of the name.

4. Titania, and reasons for Shakespeare's choice of this name for the Queen of Fairyland.

5. Notice that the rhythm changes whenever the fairies speak; what was Shakespeare's custom in this respect?

6. Does English literature, previous to Shakespeare, present any similar examples of fairy poetry?

TOPIC III.

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM, ACT III.

I. DIFFICULT OR DOUBTFUL PASSAGES.

Scene. Line.

1. 114-22. Comment on the birds mentioned. Explain the allusion in the lines —

"Whose note full many a man doth mark
And dares not answer nay."

Scene. Line.

1. 152-62. Ten lines rhyming together are very uncommon in Shakespeare. What special effect was probably designed? In respect to rhyme, how do Shakespeare's early plays compare with the later ones?
2. 97. Explain "With sighs of love that costs the fresh blood dear."
2. 296. Explain the point of the epithet "painted maypole."
2. 393. Explain "Turns into yellow gold his salt green streams."

II. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. Sources of the play. Mention previous writings from which Shakespeare may have gleaned severally as follows:—

- a.* Characters and names of Theseus and Hippolyta.
- b.* Philostrate.
- c.* Interlude of Pyramus and Thisbe.
- d.* Machinery of Oberon and his fairy court.
- e.* Magic of the flower-juice.

2. Did Shakespeare commonly invent his plots, or use one already familiar? How was it in the present instance?

3. Shakespeare's plots usually culminate near the middle of the play. At what point do you place the culmination in this instance?

4. Discuss the manner in which the three separate actions are developed in this act, the blending of the diverse elements into an artistic harmony. Was this complexity of action a new thing in dramatic literature?

5. Cite the passages of special poetic beauty, in this act.

TOPIC IV.

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM, ACTS IV. & V.

I. DIFFICULT OR DOUBTFUL PASSAGES.

Act. Sc. Line.

- iv. i. 27. Comment on "the tongs and the bones."
- i. 30. Explain Bottom's "bottle of hay."
- i. 39, 40. Comment on the "woodbine and honey-suckle" and "female ivy."
- i. 129. Explain "the rite of May."
- i. 188. Explain the sense in which Demetrius is "like a jewel."
- v. i. 44-67. Explain the allusions in the title of the four "sports" offered by Philostrate; mention some of the theories concerning the "muses mourning for the death of learning."

II. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. Is there any special significance in the choice of "Bottom" as the weaver's name; also, in making him claim a "reasonable good ear" (Act. IV. sc. i, l. 26)?

2. Was the fondness of Theseus for hunting due to Shakespeare's invention; if not, where may he have found it?

3. What allusion in Act IV. fixes the exact days of the year in which the action takes place?

4. Discuss both the thought and the expression of the opening speech of Theseus (Act V.), concerning the nature and office of the poet's inspiration.

5. Quote Theseus' answer to Hippolyta when she calls the interlude "silly stuff," and say what requirements it makes on readers of the drama, or, indeed, on interpreters of any art.

6. Special significance of the choice of Pyramus and Thisbe as the subject of the interlude? Does it seem to you a sort of parody on the pathetic part of the play?

7. In what plays or poems had this story been told previously. (For "A New Sonet of Pyramus and Thisbe," see Knight's edition, note on the line "This palpable gross play.")

TOPIC V.

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM. GENERAL RÉSUMÉ.

I. TITLE OF THE PLAY.

The word *midsummer* does not occur in the text of the play, nor is this the time when the action takes place. What, probably, had Shakespeare in mind in choosing the title? Who is the dreamer,—the poet, any of the characters, or the spectator?

II. DURATION OF THE ACTION.

Does it cover the *four days* of the first speech in the play?

III. CHARACTERISTICS.

Show in what ways this play is "original and peculiar in its whole character, and of a class by itself," as Verplanck expresses it. Compare with "The Tempest;" how like and how unlike?

IV. FAIRIES.

How do these differ from human beings in their mental and moral nature? Read Hood's "Plea of the Midsummer Fairies," and note its tribute to Shakespeare.

V. HUMAN CHARACTERS.

Are these of special interest or strongly differentiated?

VI. DRAMATIC ESTIMATE.

1. Pepys wrote in his Diary (1622), "It is the most insipid, ridiculous play that I ever saw in my life." Hazlitt said, "When acted, it is converted from a delightful fiction to a dull pantomime." Do you agree in judging the play unfitted for stage representation?

2. Give some account of various adaptations; the dates of stage-presentation.

VII. CHRONOLOGY.

Where in the list of Shakespeare's plays is this one generally placed? On what evidence, internal and external?

VIII. ESSAY.

Prepare a brief paper on any one of the foregoing topics; or, write a general thesis on the play as a whole.

TOPIC VI.

JULIUS CÆSAR, ACT I.

I. DIFFICULT OR DOUBTFUL PASSAGES.

Scene. Line.

1. 3. Explain the use of "mechanical;" compare with *Mid-Night's Dream*, Act III. sc. 2, l. 9.

1. 67. Explain the nature of the "feast of Lupercal;" its purpose, and its relation to the name of our month February.

2. 4. Explain the allusion "run his course," and by reason of what office and rank this was done by Antony.
2. 155. Explain the allusion "there was a Brutus once," and the purpose of the allusion on this occasion.
2. 158, 9. Explain "jealous" and "aim."
2. 269. When Cicero "spoke Greek," was his speech according to the custom at court?

II. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. Give a brief résumé of the historical events immediately preceding the date at which the play opens. Explain the customs of the time with respect to "triumphs;" what one is alluded to in Scene 1, and how many had Cæsar previously celebrated?

2. What effect on the incipient conspiracy might be wrought by seeing (in Scene 2) Cæsar's wish for a child?

3. How do you interpret the "passions of some difference" (sc. 2, l. 37) to which Brutus confesses?

4. Discuss the motives of Cassius in protesting his own truthfulness and his reserve in forming friendships. (Sc. 2, ll. 62-75.)

5. Discuss the sentiment in Scene 2, ll. 136 and 137. Do you believe in "luck," or, with Cassius, that "men at some time are masters of their fates"?

6. What special feature of Roman life at this period does Shakespeare bring out prominently in the first scene?

7. What means are taken to develop in the audience a sense of impending horror?

8. Collateral reading. Church: Roman Life in the Days of Cicero.

TOPIC VII.

JULIUS CÆSAR, ACT II. SCENE I.

I. DIFFICULT OR DOUBTFUL PASSAGES.

Scene. Line.

- I. 66. Comment on "the genius and the mortal instruments."
- I. 70. Why does he say "*brother* Cassius"?
- I. 85, 86. Meaning of "Erebus" and "prevention."
Compare this thought with the place given to Brutus and Cassius by Dante in his "Inferno." (Canto XXXIV.)
- I. 197. Explain the Elizabethan use of the word "ceremony."

II. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. Discuss the speech of Brutus, beginning "It must be by his death." What indications do you gather from it concerning the character Shakespeare meant to represent?

2. Discuss the speech of Brutus beginning, "Between the acting of a dreadful thing." Is such a state of mind peculiar to Brutus, or is it a general human characteristic?

3. What trait of character is revealed in Brutus through his interview with Portia? Compare with the conjugal scene in 1 Henry IV., Act II. Scene 3.

4. What self-revelations are made by Portia in her plea with Brutus, and her allusion to the "voluntary wound"?

5. A modern critic has suggested that this scene properly belongs in Act I. since one conspiracy (against Brutus) ends and another (against Cæsar) begins.

Discuss some of the points of interest thus far, namely:—

- a.* The Roman populace. Rome in the last days of the Republic.
- b.* The art of Cassius in working things to his own ends.
- c.* The part taken by Brutus in the war between Pompey and Cæsar. How does it affect our judgment of his present action?

TOPIC VIII.

JULIUS CÆSAR, ACT II. SCENES 2, 3, 4, AND ACT III. SCENE I.

I. DIFFICULT OR DOUBTFUL PASSAGES.

Act. Sc. Line.

- ii. 3. 89. Explain the allusion "shall press for cinctures," etc.
3. 94. Was it true that the crown was about to be offered?
4. 42. Explain "Brutus hath a suit," etc.
- iii. 1. 11. As to the locality of the assassination, what differences between the play and the historical account?
1. 77. Is there any classical authority for "Et tu, Brute"?

II. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. Comment on the important part played by superstition in the religious beliefs and customs of the Romans. Are soldiers commonly more superstitious than men in other callings?

2. Describe Cæsar's various emotions, in Act II., Scene 2. Quote to prove.

3. Compare Calpurnia with Portia.

4. Comment on Portia's conduct in Scene 4. Is it inconsistent with your former impressions of her?

5. Does the tone of Cæsar's talk just before his death accord with what history says of him? If not, what good dramatic reasons may have caused Shakespeare to depart from historic conceptions?

6. Does the prophecy of a stage celebrity (Act III. sc. 1, ll. 112-119) seem natural at such a moment?

7. Read some collateral history; for example, the last three chapters of Froude's Cæsar; or Chap. XVI. of Allen's Short History of the Roman People.

8. Write character studies of

a. JULIUS CÆSAR.

b. PORTIA.

TOPIC IX.

JULIUS CÆSAR, ACT III. SCENES 2 AND 3.

I. DIFFICULT OR DOUBTFUL PASSAGES.

Scene. Line.

2. 13. Meaning of "lovers" here.

2. 35. Explain "the question of his death."

2. 179. Explain "Cæsar's angel."

2. 241. Value of a *drachma*?

II. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. A new dramatic action now begins, and these two scenes should comprise an entire act. Note that all characters thus far introduced disappear, with the exception of Antony, Brutus, Cassius, Lucius and the citizens. Reasons for the introduction of Cinna?

2. As a piece of composition, what is your opinion of Brutus's speech? Had Shakespeare any historic basis for giving Brutus this style? What traits of character are implied?

3. Comment on Mark Antony's oration. Trace the different motives underlying the successive stages of his appeal; reasons for dwelling on the "honourable men;" for referring to the battle of the Nervii, etc.

4. Points of difference between the two speeches; had the one by Cassius also been given, what direction do you think it would have taken?

5. Was Antony right in calling Brutus an orator and himself none? Is there any difference between a speech and an oration? If so, what?

6. Do you find any proof of the truth of Brutus's judgment of Antony that he "could do no more than Cæsar's arm when Cæsar's head is off"?

7. Compare the effect of the respective speeches of Brutus and Antony upon the people. Why was Antony's speech convincing and Brutus's simply puzzling?

8. Collateral reading. Merivale's History of the Romans under the Empire, Chap. XXIII.; quoted by Hudson in school edition of "Julius Cæsar."

TOPIC X.

JULIUS CÆSAR, ACTS IV. AND V.

I. DIFFICULT OR DOUBTFUL PASSAGES.

Act. Sc. Line

iv. 1. 49. Explain "bay'd about with enemies."

3. 8. Explain "every *nice* event should bear its comment."

3. 47. Explain the "venom of your spleen."

Act. Sc. Line.

- v. 1. 14. What was "the bloody sign of battle"?
1. 75. Meaning of "I held Epicurus strong."

II. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. How long a time do you suppose to have elapsed since the close of the last scene? According to history, where did the opening scene of Act IV. occur? Where, according to the play?

2. How long a time, historically, between Scenes 1 and 2 of Act IV.?

3. Discuss the general truth of the description of a "hot friend cooling" (Act IV. sc. 2, ll. 19-28).

4. In the quarrel between Brutus and Cassius, which one shows the best spirit and helps most toward reconciliation?

5. What do you think of Brutus's boast that he "can raise no money by vile means," considering his willingness to take the money raised by Cassius?

6. What did Cassius have in mind in saying, "Now, Brutus, thank yourself," etc. (Act V. sc. 1, l. 45)?

7. Comment on Brutus's manner in announcing Portia's death.

8. Do you consider the play rightly named; is Brutus or Cæsar the real hero?

9. Is the play an unintentional glorification of tyrannicide?

10. Write character studies of

a. BRUTUS.

b. CASSIUS.

c. MARK ANTONY.

TOPIC XI.

MERCHANT OF VENICE, ACT I.

I. DIFFICULT OR DOUBTFUL PASSAGES.

Scene. Line.

- I. 66. Explain "When shall we laugh? say, when?"
- I. 74. Explain "You have too much *respect upon* the world."
- I. 165, 166. Consult Shakespeare's "Julius Cæsar," and compare the two Portias.
- I. 185. Explain "of my trust or for my sake."
2. 5-8. How do you understand Nerissa's philosophy of life?
3. I. Value of the Venetian *silver ducat* in Shakespeare's time, and at present?
3. 30-33. Explain Venetian customs as shown in Shylock's question, "What news on the Rialto?" also, in his refusal to dine with Bassanio.

II. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. Do you agree with Bassanio that "Gratiano speaks an infinite deal of nothing" (Act I. sc. 1, l. 114)?
2. Was Antonio's sadness a mood, or due to some vague presentiment of evil, or to something inherent in the nature of the man? Does Gratiano understand Antonio aright?
3. What clew to Portia's character in her comments on her suitors, and evident preference of "a scholar and a soldier"?
4. Consider Portia's decision to let chance provide a husband rather than ignore her father's will. In

matters of the affections, what weight should attach to parental authority as compared with individual rights?

5. Sum up the grounds of Antonio's bitterness; of Shylock's. Is one man more justifiable than the other?

6. In proposing the pound of flesh forfeiture, does Shylock already look forward to compassing the death of Antonio?

7. Why does Bassanio fear the bond more than does Antonio himself?

TOPIC XII.

MERCHANT OF VENICE, ACT II.

I. DIFFICULT OR DOUBTFUL PASSAGES.

Sc. Line.

2. 92. Explain "*I have set up my rest to run away.*"

2. 143. Explain a "*fairer table.*"

5 30. What indication here of Venetian architecture?

II. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. Take Bassanio's expostulation with Gratiano (sc. 2) and Gratiano's own reflections on life-purposes (Act I. sc. 1), and describe the character of Gratiano.

2. Why does Shylock accept this invitation (sc. 5, l. 11), having spurned a similar one before the bond was signed?

3. Does Jessica's conduct as a daughter seem entirely unnatural, considering the revelations of her home life? Do the different solutions of parental responsibilities, exemplified by Portia and Jessica, carry with them any "lessons to parents"?

4. Probable effect of Jessica's flight with Antonio's friend on Shylock's attitude toward Antonio.

5. What relation to each other have the rapid succession of incidents in Act II. sc. 8, — the Jew's fury at the abduction of his daughter, the first indication of possible disaster to Antonio's ships, a further allusion to the close friendship of Antonio and Bassanio?

6. What interval of time do you suppose to elapse between Acts I. and II.?

TOPIC XIII.

MERCHANT OF VENICE, ACT III.

I. DIFFICULT OR DOUBTFUL PASSAGES.

Scene. Line.

2. 49-53. What allusion to English customs?

2. 85, 86. Explain the force of "beard" and "white liver."

2. 274. Explain "impeach the freedom of the State."

3. 27. Explain "commodity," with reference to Venetian laws and customs.

Date of the action of the play, as shown by references to the University of Padua, and also by Antonio's "ventures in Mexico."

II. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. Does Shylock's first thought of enforcing his bond occur in this act, or earlier?

2. Do you judge Shylock had a genuine love for his religion and for his Sacred Nation? Does the synagogue appointment imply religious hypocrisy?

3. Do you detect any tenderness in the nature of Shylock?

4. Are Portia's content with the present, and Bassanio's impatience, at the beginning of Scene 2, sex-characteristics?

5. Name the influences which make it certain that Bassanio, as a true lover, must choose the leaden casket.

6. Interpret the song accompanying Bassanio's act of choosing. What influence has it on the event? Did Portia thereby disobey the spirit while holding to the letter of her injunctions?

7. How does Bassanio's success with the caskets affect your expectations with regard to Antonio's fate?

8. Recalling Portia's stately reserve to former lovers, are you prepared for her complete self-surrender to Bassanio? Which — Bassanio or Portia — seems to you to do the chief love-making?

9. What new and more intimate relations of Antonio do you gain through his letter, and what Bassanio says of the writer? Through his scene with the jailer and his acceptance of the issue of events?

10. Do you accept Portia's theory of the necessity of *likeness* between friends?

11 Character of Bassanio in brief.

TOPIC XIV.

MERCHANT OF VENICE, ACT IV.

I. DIFFICULT OR DOUBTFUL PASSAGES.

Scene. Line.

1. 29. Special signification of "royal merchant" here and elsewhere applied to Antonio?

2. 16. Explain the meaning of "old" here; what survival of it have we in modern speech?

II. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. What effect on the nature of the suit has Shylock's refusal of the money? Why does not Shylock, as well as Portia, think of this?

2. Were Antonio's demands (Sc. I, ll. 371-381) necessary or reasonable?

3. At what point does Shylock first realize the position in which he has placed himself?

4. When Shylock leaves the court, what are your feelings toward him? Have you anything to urge in his defence?

5. Do you suppose that Shakespeare meant to excite sympathy for Shylock?

6. In your judgment, did Shylock "contrive" against Antonio's life?

7. Was Portia's line of defence supplied by Bellario or original with herself? What opportunities for legal study were available to women of her time? Were trained wit and exact knowledge exceptional in the sex?

8. Was Bassanio right to break his promise about the rings? What principle of conduct, expressed by himself in a previous line of the play, would justify him?

9. Reasons for the introduction of Scene 2, both with relation to the progress of the story and for artistic purposes?

10. Discuss the *law* of the trial scene. (Read Shylock v. Antonio, by C. H. Phelps, in *Atlantic*, April, 1886.)

TOPIC XV.

MERCHANT OF VENICE, ACT V.

I. DIFFICULT OR DOUBTFUL PASSAGES.

Scene. Line.

- I. 1-15. Explain the classical allusions.
- I. 109. "The moon sleeps with Endymion." In the number of its classical allusions, how does this play compare with Shakespeare's other plays?
- I. 197. Explain the meaning of "virtue" of the ring, by reference to Portia's speech in presenting it. (Act III. sc. 2.)

II. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION.

I. Name other poets, ancient and modern, who make use of this ancient notion of the music of the spheres (l. 61).

X 2. Is the Fifth Act necessary or not; its relation to the rest of the play? Why is it generally omitted in stage-representation?

X 3. Why does Antonio appear in this act and Shylock not? How does it show the working out of the principles of good and evil?

X 4. Is there any ethical import, any life-lesson in the Merchant of Venice? If so, what?

X 5. What do you consider the finest passage in the play?

X 6. Does your chief interest centre in Portia and her lover, or in the relations of Shylock and Antonio? Shakespeare's probable intention in this respect?

7. Shakespeare's part as actor at the Globe Theatre in this play. (See Goadby's "England of Shakespeare," pp. 163-167.)

TOPIC XVI.

MERCHANT OF VENICE. SUMMARY.

I. HISTORICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL.

1. Sources of the play.

- a.* Story of the caskets. Earlier forms of the same story.
- b.* The pound of flesh. Earlier forms of the same story.
- c.* Combination of the two stories by an earlier dramatist.
- d.* Similar incident in history with the rôles of Jew and Christian reversed.
- e.* To which of these sources was Shakespeare probably indebted?

2. Date of writing. Date of publication. Early editions.

3. State briefly the method of determining the chronological order of Shakespeare's plays. (Dowden's "Primer," pp. 32-46.) Its value? Where, according to this scheme, does the "Merchant of Venice" come?

References:

Dowden: Shakspeare Primer, pp. 91-96.

Morley: Ed. Merchant of Venice in Cassell's National Library (10 cts.) reprints the old stories and poem.

II. WITH THE CRITICS.

Hazlitt: Characters of Shakespear's Plays, ed. Bohn, pp. 189 fol.

C. Knight: Ed. of Shakespear, Comedies, I. 449-456.

Hudson, Dowden, Gervinus and others, at the student's convenience.

"The Sisters of Portia," and "Shylock" in *Shakespeareana*, November, 1886.

III. WITH THE ACTORS.

Lawrence Barrett, *Shakespeariana*, November, 1886.

Henry Irving, *Shakespeariana*, January, 1884.

Edwin Booth, *Shakespeariana*, March, 1887.

IV. CHARACTER STUDIES.

1. ANTONIO. 2. SHYLOCK. 3. PORTIA.

V. COLLATERAL READING.

Philipson: The Jew in English Fiction.

Spedding: The Story of the Merchant of Venice, *Cornhill*, 1880; *ibid. Library Magazine*, 1880, Vol. III.

TOPIC XVII.

MACBETH, ACT I.

I. SCOTLAND IN THE ELEVENTH CENTURY.

Consider the subject with special regard to the state of Scottish civilization; the laws which governed the succession to the throne; the historic incidents which furnish the basis of the play. This preliminary study is not because of any historical interest in the play, but because of its value in furnishing the proper atmosphere and setting.

References:

Rolfe: *Macbeth*, pp. 131-150, and pp. 14, 15.

Guizot: *Shakespeare and His Times*. Chapter, *Macbeth*.

II. DIFFICULT OR DOUBTFUL PASSAGES.

Scene. Line.

1. Explain the two closing lines of this scene.

3. 53, 139. Meaning of "fantastical"? Whence grew its modern and more restricted meaning?

Scene. Line

3. 88. Explain the "insane root" and the use of "on" before it.
7. 65-67. Explain "That memory, the *warder of the brain*, shall be a *fume*," etc.

III. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What sort of a character does the second scene of Act I. lead us to expect in the unseen Macbeth?

2. Account for the difference between the two men, Banquo and Macbeth, during and after the interview with the Weird Sisters.

3. Did Macbeth speak the truth probably in saying, "My dull brain was wrought with things forgotten" (Act I. sc. 3, l. 150)?

4. Why is Malcolm's appointment as Prince of Cumberland fatal to all hope of Macbeth's lawful succession? Do you consider this the birth-moment of guilty *purpose* in Macbeth's mind, or had it existed already?

5. Lady Macbeth's soliloquies (Act I. sc. 5) are to be studied carefully. In the first, judge how far her description of her husband is trustworthy; that is, how far we can depend upon it as true to the real Macbeth and how far it is likely to be only Macbeth as seen through her eyes. What light does she throw on her own character in describing his, although she does not speak of self? Do you discover any *wifely* traits?

In the second soliloquy, compare her words with those of Macbeth in Scene 3, while the same ambition was working in his mind. Compare her invocation to "thick night" with his milder, "Stars, hide your fires," etc. What significance as character interpreters?

6. Contrast Banquo's and Duncan's words (Act I. sc. 6), in approaching the castle, with Lady Macbeth's

words in the preceding scene, "The raven himself is hoarse," etc. Explain the reason for the diverse images in describing the same time and scene.

7. Study the dialogue (Act I. sc. 7), and say with whom rests the main responsibility for the act about to be performed. The plan and details originate with the wife (ll. 60-70); other lines (ll. 47-49) seem to place the first conception of the "enterprise" with Macbeth. Note also that the same facts which with Macbeth had urged "strong against the deed" are, in the woman's mind, the strongest arguments for present action, having "made themselves."

TOPIC XVIII.

MACBETH, ACT II.

I. DIFFICULT OR DOUBTFUL PASSAGES.

Scene. Line.

1. 8. Explain Banquo's allusion to "cursed thoughts."
1. 25. Explain "If you shall cleave to my consent."
4. 7. Explain "travelling lamp."
4. 15. Meaning of "minions" here and elsewhere in Shakespeare.

II. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. Was the dagger which appeared as soon as Macbeth was alone and the lights carried out a part of the supernatural machinery of temptation, or was it a "false creation" of the "heat-oppressed brain"? Can you offer any scientific explanation of the appearance?

2. Had Lady Macbeth herself taken wine, or was she simply "made bold" by the knowledge that the groom's

sleep is drugged? Why is she nervous and startled now that the deed is actually doing or done?

3. When Macbeth confesses that he could not say "Amen" (Sc. 2), do you think him only a conscious hypocrite; or does this mark a point in his spiritual history,—one more conflict between light and darkness?

4. Give your impression of the whole scene and the effect of the knocking.

5. Would you think the play improved by the omission of this low soliloquy of the Porter (Sc. 3)? Does this bit of comedy, coming in the midst of such tragic scenes, find a parallel in others of Shakespeare's plays?

6. How do you reconcile Macbeth's prompt murder of the grooms with his horror at the mere thought of killing Duncan, and his refusal to carry the bloody daggers back to the chamber?

7. Is Lady Macbeth's swoon real or feigned?

8. What use of popular superstitions is made in Scene 4?

TOPIC XIX.

MACBETH, ACT III.

I. DIFFICULT OR DOUBTFUL PASSAGES.

Scene. Line

4. 61. Modernize "This is the *very* painting of your fear." Trace the meaning from the derivation and also our modern use in such phrases as "His *very* faults are dear to me."
4. 64. Explain "impostors *to* true fear."

II. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. Compare Macbeth's soliloquy (Act III. sc. 1) with the one preceding Duncan's murder (Act I. sc. 7). What do you infer from the absence of all scruples now? What state of mind is revealed by such expressions as "fruitless crown," "barren sceptre," and "unlineal hand"? What evidence of moral deterioration in the different nature of the impelling motive to crime now? Why does he seek to set aside the weird prophesies in Banquo's case, when in his own he had held them as words he was bound to see fulfilled? What is the meaning of "champion me to the utterance," and what derivation?

2. What do you think of Macbeth's justification of his present methods, as it comes out in his talk with the murderers; and of the nature of his appeal to them?

3. Can you explain the little touch of feeling, almost tenderness, in Macbeth's closing lines of this scene?

4. Illustrate the character of Lady Macbeth from her words before and after the entrance of her husband. (Sc. 2.)

5. Meaning of "Nature's copy's not eterne." (Sc. 2, l. 38). Do you infer from this, or from anything, that Lady Macbeth knew or suspected her husband's design against Banquo?

6. What contrast of disposition and purpose appears in the dialogue between husband and wife (Sc. 2). In tenderness, how does it compare with former occasions?

7. What do you learn of Macbeth through his ag-grieved speech (Sc. 4, ll. 75-80), because of the ghost's appearance at the banquet? Is there any sign of true repulsion for his acts?

8. How do you explain the difference in Lady Macbeth's manner toward Macbeth when they are

alone after the banquet as compared with her conduct after the murder of Duncan (Act II. sc. 2)?

9. What interval of time do you suppose to have elapsed between Acts II. and III.?

TOPIC XX.

MACBETH, ACT IV.

I. DIFFICULT OR DOUBTFUL PASSAGES.

Scene. Line.

1. 121. Explain the allusion to "two-fold balls and treble sceptres."
1. 123. Explain "blood-bolter'd Banquo."
2. 19. Explain "when we hold rumour," etc.

II. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. Macbeth has been assured of the absence of danger from everything except that which seems the impossible. Why then does he not rest secure in the sense of practical impregnability, and embrace the chance to desist from further bloodshed? What does he mean by "take a bond of fate"?

2. Did Shakespeare invent these stories of Macduff's birth and the moving forest?

3. Compare

"The flighty purpose never is o'ertook
Unless the deed go with it."

with lines in preceding scenes that express so nearly the same thought as to furnish strong evidence of Macbeth's nature.

4. Where, in the scale of Macbeth's guilt, do you rank the murders in the castle of the absent Macduff?

5. What reason had Macbeth to distrust Macduff, as shown in Macduff's words on two occasions earlier in the play?

6. How do you understand "He has no children" (Sc. 3, l. 216)?

7. What clew is given (Sc. 3 l. 160), to the time that has elapsed since Malcolm's flight?

8. What do you learn in Scene 3 concerning the general character of Macbeth's reign, outside of the specific acts already known to us?

9. What important difference between this and all preceding scenes of the play, in respect to the people and the thoughts which engage them? In fine passages and forcible lines how does it compare?

10. At what moment does the possibility of revenge on Macbeth first enter the mind of Macduff?

TOPIC XXI.

MACBETH, ACT V.

Scene. Line.

2. 3-5. Explain —

"For their *dear causes*

Would to the bleeding and the grim alarm

Excite the *mortified man*."

2. 23. Meaning of "*pester'd* senses"?

2. 27. Meaning of "medicine" here?

3. 8. What is implied by "epicure" here, and what similar allusions in the Waverley Novels?

3. 11-17. Trace these words of reproach to their origin.

Macbeth uses sometimes "you," sometimes "thou," in addressing the Doctor; the Doctor uses "you" in replying. Explain the Elizabethan distinction between these pronouns.

II. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. Do you find it easy to understand the sleep-walking scene, in view of your previous acquaintance with Lady Macbeth? Can you connect it with anything that has gone before? Consider present conditions — her probable isolation "since his majesty went into the field," and hence the inability to speak their "free hearts each to other" — do these alone furnish adequate explanation?

2. Are her words indicative of her actual state of mind when awake? Can you trace in them her prevailing tendencies as seen in her waking hours? What words of former scenes, by their repetition, but with changed meaning, give an invaluable clew here?

3. From all that you have seen of Lady Macbeth, what do you consider her ruling passion?

4. Did Lady Macbeth commit suicide? Or what do you consider the causes of her death?

5. What effect does it have on Macbeth and on our feeling toward him?

6. Which is the more guilty, — Macbeth or Lady Macbeth?

7. Artistic and dramatic value of the play: what saves it from being a mere accumulation of horrors?

8. How does "Macbeth" compare with "Hamlet" in the quantity of its psychological matter? Reasons for the difference?

9. Character of Macduff in brief.

TOPIC XXII.

MACBETH.

I. THE SUPERNATURAL SCENES.

The supernatural portions of the play having thus far been but slightly noticed, the student will now turn back and group together the four scenes marked by the appearance of the Weird Sisters, for the sake of considering the following points : —

1. Why was any supernatural agency employed?
2. Why was it necessary to put it into shapes that would be visible to audience as well as to hero?
3. Is the human responsibility lessened by the use of supernatural instigation?
4. Why does Shakespeare make the witches speak in a different metre from the rest of the play?
5. Does any difference appear in the respective characters of the "sisters"?
6. What justification for witch-scenes had Shakespeare in popular beliefs? Study the witch terms for many superstitions of the time.

References :

Dyer: *Folk-Lore of Shakespeare*, pp. 27-31.

Lecky: *Rise of Rationalism*, Vol. I., pp. 61 and 224.

Scott: *Demonology and Witchcraft*, Letter VIII.

II. WITH THE CRITICS.

1. Coleridge: *Works*, Harper's Edition, Vol. IV. pp. 164 fol.
2. Dowden: *Shakspeare, His Mind and Art*, pp. 217-228.

3. Hudson : Shakespeare's Life, Art, and Characters, Vol. II. pp. 313-349.

4. Hazlitt. Characters of Shakespear's Plays, Bohn Library Edition, pp. 11-23.

5. Snider : The Shakespearian Drama, Tragedies, pp. 210-285.

6. Taine : English Literature, Book II. chap. 4.

7. De Quincey : On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth. Miscellaneous Essays, pp. 9-15.

8. Irving's Interpretation of Shakespeare, by Edward R. Russell, in *The Fortnightly Review* of 1883; reprinted in *Choice Literature*, November, 1883.

9. Salvini: Impressions of some Shakspearean characters. *The Century*, November, 1881.

This list may be extended, shortened, or otherwise altered at the convenience or pleasure of students. It is offered as fairly representative of leading opinions. In general, the consideration of two or three names would furnish material enough for one lesson, and the number of lessons should be arranged accordingly, and not as here indicated.

TOPIC XXIII.

MACBETH. SUMMARY.

I. HISTORICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL.

1. Whence did Shakespeare get the materials for "Macbeth," and what points of resemblance and difference between the history and the tragedy?

2. What incident may have suggested the subject to Shakespeare?

3. What was the probable date of composition, judging from (a) certain lines in the play; (b) general style

and characteristics of verse; (c) contemporaneous mention by other writers?

4. When was it first published, and in what form?

5. What passages are regarded by some as interpolations, and on what internal evidence?

6. What external reasons for supposing the play has been greatly altered since Shakespeare's death?

II. THE WEIRD SISTERS.

The study of the critics will reveal a great diversity of views concerning the poet's intention with respect to *nature* of these beings. Discuss the four interpretations represented respectively by

1. Dr. Johnson, Voltaire.

2. Schlegel, Dowden.

3. Coleridge, Lamb.

4. Hudson, Gervinus.

III. CHARACTER STUDIES.

1. MACBETH. 2. LADY MACBETH.

IV. COLLATERAL READING.

Herford: Literary Relations of England and Germany in the 16th Century, pp. 231-238.

Hudson: Preface to School edition of "Macbeth."

TOPIC XXIV.

HAMLET, ACT I.

I. DIFFICULT OR DOUBTFUL PASSAGES.

Scene. Line.

1. 13. Meaning of "*rivals* of my watch." Give the derivation of the word and show how it came to have its present meaning.

Scene. Line.

1. 154. Meaning of "extravagant" and "erring";
how differing from present usage.
2. 65. Comment on "A little more than kin," etc.
4. 36. Explain the "dram of eale."
4. 85. Explain "I'll make a ghost of him that
lets me."

II. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. Point out the passages in Scene 1 embodying old and popular superstitions.

2. "The imperial jointress of this warlike state" (Sc. 2, l. 9). What rules governed the succession of the Danish crown, and by what tenure did Claudius reign?

3. Hamlet's first two speeches are made up of plays upon words. Does this indicate a light-hearted disposition, a trifling mood; or may his punning be assigned to other tendencies, not uncommon to humanity, under strong tension? Note, in this connection, his silence after the King's long speech, his brief but respectful answers to his mother, his outburst after the departure of the others.

4. What manner of man do you judge this "young Hamlet" to be, — judging from this first introduction, especially from this soliloquy?

5. Give your opinion of Polonius's precepts in his farewell to Laertes (Sc. 3). Is it an ideal parental benediction? What manner of man does it indicate the speaker to be?

6. Horatio implored Hamlet not to follow the Ghost, lest it should deprive his "sovereignty of reason" (Sc. 4), — in allusion to the old ghost-lore, that one who talked with a ghost was either mad already or made mad: does his later conduct, when rejoined by his

friends, indicate that this result had happened, or is his wildness half-feigned, a reaction from the stress of feeling after the overwhelming and supernatural revelation?

TOPIC XXV.

HAMLET, ACT II.

I. DIFFICULT OR DOUBTFUL PASSAGES.

Scene. Line

1. 38. Explain "fetch of warrant."
1. 65. Explain "windlasses and assays of bias."
2. 317. Explain "tickle of the sere."
2. 370. Explain "I am but mad north northwest ;
when the wind is southerly I know a
hawk from a hand-saw."
2. 395, 396. Hamlet here quotes a scrap of an old
song. (See Percy's "Reliques of An-
cient Poetry.")

II. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. How do you understand Polonius's parting instruction to Reynaldo (Sc. 1, ll. 71-73), to "observe his inclination in yourself" and to "let him ply his music"?
2. In the interview between Ophelia and her father, what do you learn of Ophelia's own mind? Do you regard her silence with respect to her own feelings, and her obedience to parental authority, as due to lack of deep feeling, or does her very silence indicate depth of feeling?
3. "Jig" (Sc. 2, l. 486). Was this anything more than a dance in Shakespeare's day?
4. All that we now hear about Hamlet, and all that we see of him ourselves, show that a tremendous change has come over him since we saw him last.

We know the cause, which however was unknown to the court. Recall the fact that Hamlet alone knew of the Ghost's revelations; that even he himself dare not fully trust to them; that he has been enjoined to "revenge this foul and most unnatural murder," but also not to "taint his mind in so doing;" that whatever he does he has to answer for before the loyal court and people of King Claudius. Study his soliloquy and say whether his own self-disparagement is justified. Is it really because he is "pigeon-livered" that he fails to take the law in his own hands and murder the King, or does he show a higher kind of courage by refraining?

5. What do you infer from the words, "Now I am alone," (Sc. 2, l. 533), with which the soliloquy begins?

TOPIC XXVI.

HAMLET, ACT III.

I. DIFFICULT OR DOUBTFUL PASSAGES.

Scene. Line.

1. 144. Derivation of "nickname"?
2. 10. Explain "to split the ears of the groundlings."
2. 12, 13. Explain these allusions to the old Mystery plays, and put into modern speech the idea conveyed in "o'erdoing Termagant" and "out-herods Herod."
2. 264. Meaning of "pajock"? Why did not Hamlet rhyme?

II. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. In the last soliloquy of Hamlet (close of Act II.), it was personal desire for revenge that was uppermost.

Now his thoughts seem mainly concerned with a general and impersonal philosophy of a pessimistic kind. Account for this.

2. What do you think of Hamlet's treatment of Ophelia in the first scene of this act?

3. The expression "take arms against a sea of troubles" (Sc. 1, l. 59) has been much criticised, but it is as old as literature. Find instances from the old Greek dramatists.

4. In Hamlet's instruction to the players (Sc. 2), what do you think of the exposition of the purpose and ideals of the drama? What would it lead one to infer concerning the author and the actor Shakespeare?

5. Compare Hamlet's tone and manner in converse with Horatio with his tone and manner toward others. Your inferences.

6. What do you understand to be the source of Hamlet's evident spite toward Polonius?

7. Do you think King Claudius a criminal by instinct and by habit, or a criminal by "chance"?

8. Was the Queen accessory to her husband's murder? If not, was she even aware of it?

9. Was the exclamation, "As kill a king!" (Sc. 5, l. 29), one of true innocence and amazement, or the startled outcry of conscious guilt?

TOPIC XXVII.

HAMLET, ACT IV.

I. DIFFICULT OR DOUBTFUL PASSAGES.

Scene. Line.

3. 30. Explain "go a progress."

5. 41. Explain the allusion in "the owl was a baker's daughter."

Scene. Line.

7. 83. Explain "they *can* well on horseback."
7. 121. Explain a "spendthrift sigh that hurts by easing."

II. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. From the King's soliloquy (Sc. 3), it is plain that England paid some sort of homage to the Danish crown; what would this indicate with respect to the date of the story?

2. What state of society does the whole course of the play indicate?

3. Explain Hamlet's continual lapse into irony. Does it seem to you like a mask, or like a part of his real nature, proceeding from his lack of any purpose beyond the moment?

4. Study the soliloquy (Sc. 4), where again we have an opportunity of seeing Hamlet's inmost thought of the moment. Are his scruples mere pretexts to cover his want of determination? Does his aversion to action in fact proceed from a disproportionate activity in ideas? Is he the victim of feebleness of will, or is it the exercise of a large discourse looking before and after that restrains him?

5. How long an interval do you suppose to have elapsed between Scenes 4 and 5?

6. Why does the King take pains to remind Gertrude that Hamlet is the "most violent author of his own just remove"?

7. Laertes, unlike Hamlet, has no thought of delaying revenge for the murder of *his* father. Why?

8. What lines furnish an instance of Shakespeare's exact observation of nature?

TOPIC XXVIII.

HAMLET, ACT V.

I. DIFFICULT OR DOUBTFUL PASSAGES.

Scene. Line.

1. 266. Explain "woo't drink up eisel?"
1. 277. Explain "when that her golden couplets are disclosed."
2. 6. Explain "worse than the mutines in the bilboes."
2. 7-10. Paraphrase this passage according to your understanding of it.
2. 275. Stage reasons for the introduction of the description of Hamlet as "fat and scant of breath."

II. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. What do you infer of Shakespeare's opinion of politicians, from his use of the word (Sc. 1, l. 77)?
2. What grammatical usage of Elizabethan and Early English authors justified Shakespeare's use of the complete present infinitive, in a manner not now allowed (Sc. 1, ll. 233, 234)?
3. Do you think the play better or worse for the grave-diggers' scene? Probable reasons for its introduction by Shakespeare?
4. Do you believe that Hamlet did truly love Ophelia to the extent of his professions (Sc. 1)?
5. What do you think of Hamlet's conduct with respect to Guildenstern and Rosencrantz, and of his justification of it?
6. Do you find any evidence indicating that perhaps he would have himself cancelled his own letter, had not his capture by the pirates prevented?

7. "The interim is mine" (Sc. 2, l. 73). What does this reveal of Hamlet's purposes?
8. Which one of the Greek tragedies resembles Hamlet in its leading motive?
9. What is your opinion of the play as a work of art? Of its fitness for the stage?
10. Has the play any moral lessons? If so, what?

TOPIC XXIX.

HAMLET. GENERAL RÉSUMÉ.

I. HISTORICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL.

1. On what story is Shakespeare's tragedy of "Hamlet" founded?
2. Did Shakespeare get it from the Danish historian?
3. What is the date of the earliest edition? Of the second edition?
4. What differences between the two, both in bulk and in the nature and names of the characters?
5. When was the first edition said to have been acted, and on what occasion?
6. How was the copy of the first edition probably obtained for the printer?
7. How many original copies are now extant, and by whom owned?
8. Is there any contemporaneous play of "Hamlet" in any other language than English?
9. From what sources is the present standard text of "Hamlet" chiefly derived?

II. WITH THE CRITICS.

Goethe: Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship, Book IV. Chap. 13.

Coleridge : Works, Vol. IV. pp. 145 fol. in Harper's edition.

Taine : English Literature, Book II. chap. 4.

Hudson : Life, Art, and Characters of Shakespeare, Vol. II pp. 263 fol.

Dowden : Shakspeare's Mind and Art, pp. 111 fol.

Lowell : Shakespeare Once More, in "Among My Books."

Lamb : Shakespeare's Tragedies : their Fitness for Stage Representation.

III. WITH THE ACTORS.

Phelps : Hamlet from the Actor's Standpoint.

IV. CHARACTER STUDIES.

1. HAMLET.

3. GERTRUDE.

2. OPHELIA.

4. CLAUDIUS.

TOPIC XXX.

SHAKESPEARE'S ART AND PLACE IN LITERATURE.

I. GENERALIZATIONS AS TO SHAKESPEARE'S CONSTRUCTION.

1. Consider the opening scenes of "Merchant of Venice," "Macbeth," "Hamlet," and other plays : what general rule do you note with respect to their relation to the whole tone and atmosphere of the remaining scenes ? What general rule also with respect to the important characters ?

2. Note the turning-point of the plot in "Macbeth," in "Merchant of Venice," in "Julius Cæsar" : what general rule obtains with respect to its position in each ?

3. In the selection of subjects, do you discover any particular preference by Shakespeare for any special period of time or for any geographical locality?

4. The secondary characters: what importance have they in relation to the leading ones? Illustrate by the rôles of Lorenzo and Jessica in "Merchant of Venice."

5. What governs Shakespeare's use of rhyme occasionally; of prose, introduced in the midst of his verse?

II. GENERALIZATIONS AS TO SHAKESPEARE'S PLOTS.

1. Did Shakespeare seek originality in his stories? Name any plays whose sources are unknown.

2. An imaginative writer may pick up a story that pleases him, working in the characters to fit it; or he may begin with moods, thoughts, passions, and invent the story for the sake of these. Which was Shakespeare's method?

3. In plays based on history, what regard has Shakespeare to historical accuracy?

III. GENERALIZATIONS AS TO SHAKESPEARE'S CHARACTERS.

1. Is Shakespeare himself probably portrayed in any of his characters?

2. Are Shakespeare's characters marked by similarity?

3. Whence the likeness between the humanity in Shakespeare, and the living humanity of to-day?

4. Wherein does Shakespeare chiefly repay study, — for construction, plot, or character?

IV. BIOGRAPHY AND BIBLIOGRAPHY.

1. Leading incidents in Shakespeare's life. Probable reasons influencing his choice of the profession of playwright. His record as a citizen; his family relations.

2. History of the Shakespeare Text from 1623 to the present time.

3. Concerning Richard Burbage, the earliest actor of Shakespeare's leading rôles.

References:

Halliwell-Phillips: Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare.

William Black: Judith Shakespeare.

Hudson: Preface to "Harvard Edition."

Rolfe: Introduction to "Merchant of Venice."





VII.

INTRODUCTORY TO THE STUDY OF THE ENGLISH DRAMA.

THE student of Shakespeare cannot long be content without seeking to know something of other writers in Shakespeare's chosen field of composition. Looking backward over the history of dramatic literature in England, he discovers a strange anomaly. Formerly "the drama" was held in high esteem and "the stage" in an equal contempt. For two hundred years, without fear of contradiction, we pointed to Shakespeare, writer of plays, as the greatest of all writers; on our literature of the stage we based our claim to ownership of the world's greatest literature, while, at the same time, the stage itself was shunned by pious folk, repeatedly condemned by church and council, and the poor players placed under social ostracism, sometimes

even denied sacraments, funeral rites, and marriage by the clergy. Within the last decade a very marked change appears. Stage and actor are now honored, but the drama, as a form of literary expression, is out of repute. The most eminent of living English actors, Mr. Irving, is invited to lecture at the high seats of learning both in England and America, and chooses for his theme the praise of his art; an English clergyman not long ago dedicated a memorial window to Shakespeare in a London church, and still more recently an American minister delivered the address at the opening of a new theatre; play-houses multiply rapidly; the weekday audience at a first-class theatre is as intelligent, as well-mannered and probably as virtuous as the Sunday audience at the church; — but no writer of genius enriches contemporaneous dramatic literature.

Now, if the final cause of the existence of the drama be pleasure, serving only for the adornment and amusement of life; if the stage be independent of literature and can thrive without it, — the consideration of the drama would have no place in a work of this kind. But history teaches a different lesson. From its rude beginnings as a part of the most solemn religious rites of Paganism, through its term of service as a teacher of Christian doctrine and religious

dogma, down to its present mission of furnishing pictures of actual human life, the drama has ever been a powerful force in education. Wherever there has been a truly national stage, — that is, a stage fed from the rich harvest of the national literature, — there the theatre has played a large part in the development of national life. Nor is this surprising when we consider how many faculties and needs of human nature are met and answered by the drama in its best estate. Actual life, for the majority of mankind, passes in attention to little cares, little duties, little thoughts, — is, in fact, an immersion in littlenesses. Opportunities for the exercise of the heroic virtues are rare, daily walks seldom lead among stirring examples of worth and beauty. To lift whole masses of men from their dreary or commonplace surroundings into higher planes of thought and feeling by the sight of that ideal nature which threatens to be lost in the stress of every-day life, — this is the true purpose of the drama, and for this it addresses the whole nature of man, his taste, mind, heart, conscience, and imagination. It is scarcely necessary to dwell upon its appeals to taste, since this far-stretching art calls into its service all other arts, — eloquence, poetry, music, painting, even sculpture, by setting the living body into poses and statues. Nor can any doubt its quickening effect on the

mind, acting, as Lecky has said "with equal power upon the opposite extremes of intellect." That its mission in the world's mental culture is not yet ended seems to be the belief of Professor Palgrave in his recent address at Oxford in praise of poetry: "The drama stands in a peculiar region midway between prose and verse. But when it is either poetry pure, as at Athens, or mixed, as in the England of Elizabeth and James, whilst the dramatist is faithful to the higher traditions of his art, it yet fulfils its old Aristotelian office of purifying the passions, whilst it brings the past or present before us in an enchanted world of its own, and *adds a charm to poetry itself.*"

Also, the drama is capable of being a great factor in morality.

"I have heard
That guilty creatures sitting at a play
Have by the very cunning of the scene
Been struck so to the soul that presently
They have proclaim'd their malefactions,"

says Hamlet. Who can doubt that such things have been or may be? I know that moral purpose is sometimes denied to the drama, as to all art; but what drama that has met the approval of men and stood the test of time has not been full of morality as certain and implacable as Nature herself? It is by this that it has gained

and kept its hold, albeit virtue be not always rewarded and vice punished with strict statute regularity.

Again, the drama brings rich stores to the imagination. There is probably no faculty in which people differ in degree more than in this indefinable somewhat that we call imagination,— a noble and precious power, which yet ever seems to flee from men and from races as they increase in knowledge. As nations advance in civilization they find they must fan the spark to keep it from dying out altogether. Libraries, art-galleries, and parks are opened for the people, because it is recognized that intercourse with Nature, with good books, with great pictures, stimulates the imagination, makes life brighter by contact with the ideal, and thus elevates national character. But a well-acted play wields a quicker and more universal power than any of these. Lecky is doubtless right in his assertion that it has “probably done more than any other single agent to produce that craving for the ideal, that enthusiasm of intellect out of which all great works of imagination have sprung.”

Since, then, any survey of literature tends to show the lofty sphere of the drama, the student will wish to study its curious career and the characteristics of its principal writers. He will

wish to explore that wondrous epoch in which "the men and the moment" combined as never before or since, producing a body of literature the like of which is not to be found elsewhere in the world; will wish to judge for himself whether Shakespeare was the only great man of this time, or whether he was only *facile princeps* among his fellows; will scan the works of the next one hundred years, seeking among the hosts of playwrights for one genuine dramatist; will reach our own time and find our best poets conspicuously unsuccessful in the writing of the stage, but capable of producing a new species called by courtesy "dramas," but more aptly named "dramatic poems." Possessed of great beauty in their kind, they differ so far from the old kind that we must apply new canons of judgment, new methods of interpretation, — hence involving some general survey of the evolution of the drama, its principles of composition, the conditions requisite to a national drama, the causes of decline in the English drama.



VIII.

OUTLINES OF THE STUDY OF THE ENGLISH DRAMA.

FIVE of the principal Elizabethan dramas, — namely, “Jew of Malta,” “The Alchemist,” “Philaster,” “The Two Noble Kinsmen,” “The Duchess of Malfi,” — may be had in a single volume, — Thayer’s “Best Elizabethan Plays.” In other cases the small-type references following the subject indicate such editions as are cheapest or most readily obtainable. In the selection of books of reference care has been taken to avoid all books out of print or difficult of access. Lessons XIV. and XV. may well be omitted by classes ; their unsavory, not to say disgusting, character would have excluded them entirely except that they were necessary as history in a course designed to present specimens of each period of the drama. Students will use their pleasure about close contact with them.

TOPICS.

- I. Social History of the Early English Drama.
- II. Christopher Marlowe.
- III. Ben Jonson.
- IV. Beaumont and Fletcher.
- V. The Two Noble Kinsmen.
- VI. Thomas Middleton and William Rowley.
- VII. John Webster.
- VIII. Philip Massinger.
- IX. The Elizabethan Drama. General Résumé.
- X. John Milton.
- XI. John Milton.
- XII. Historical Survey of the English Drama in its Second Period.
- XIII. John Dryden.
- XIV. William Wycherley.
- XV. William Congreve.
- XVI. Oliver Goldsmith.
- XVII. Richard Brinsley Sheridan.
- XVIII. Sir E. Bulwer Lytton.
- XIX. Alfred Tennyson.
- XX. Robert Browning.
- XXI. Robert Browning.
- XXII. Robert Browning.
- XXIII. Robert Browning.
- XXIV. Robert Browning.
- XXV. Browning as a Dramatist.
- XXVI. The Place of the Drama in Literature.
- XXVII. The Evolution of the Drama.
- XXVIII. Principles of Dramatic Composition.
- XXIX. Conditions Requisite to a National Drama.
- XXX. Causes of Decline in the English Drama.

TOPIC I.

SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE EARLY ENGLISH
DRAMA.I. IMPORTANCE OF THE THEATRE AS A FACTOR IN
CIVILIZATION.

References:

Schlegel: *Dramatic Literature*, pp. 41, 42.

Lecky: *Rationalism in Europe*, Vol. II., pp. 285-311.

II. INFLUENCES SHAPING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE
DRAMA.

1. Didactic efforts of the clergy. Result, Mysteries. Method of their representation.

2. Mediæval philosophy. Result, Moralities and Interludes. Method of representation. Versification.

3. Revival of ancient learning. Result, the first English Comedy; the first English Tragedy. Their subject matter and form. Where and by whom performed.

4. Feeling of nationality. Result, English Historical plays, as "The Troublesome Reign of King John," "The Chronical History of Leir, King of England," etc.

5. Study of Continental Literature. Result, real beginnings of English Drama under Queen Elizabeth. Opening of the first London theatres (1576). Description of buildings, scenery, audience, etc. Popularity of the Drama. Rise of acting as a profession.

References:

Goadby: *The England of Shakespeare*, Chap. X.

Dowden: *Shakspeare Primer*, Chap. I.

Symonds: Introduction to "Marlowe" in "The Mermaid Series."

Doran : Annals of the English Stage, Chaps. I., II., III.

Hudson : Life, Art, and Characters of Shakespeare, Vol. I.

III. LANGUAGE. ELIZABETHAN ENGLISH, ITS MERITS AND DEFECTS AS A MEDIUM OF EXPRESSION.

Abbott : Shakespearian Grammar, Introduction.

IV. MORALS AND INTELLECT OF THE EARLIEST ENGLISH DRAMATISTS, PEELE, GREEN, NASH, AND LODGE.

Saintsbury : History of Elizabethan Literature, Chap. III.

TOPIC II.

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE.

I. DIRECT STUDY : THE JEW OF MALTA.

1. Read the play, noting the most impressive and beautiful passages. In the number and frequency of these, do you notice any difference between the earlier and later scenes?

2. What are the principal emotions excited by your reading?

3. Your opinion of the plot and catastrophe?

4. As poetry, do you share Jonson's enthusiasm about "Marlowe's mighty line"? If so, justify it by citations from the play. How does Marlowe's verse compare with anything preceding? Explain his allusion to "jigging veins of rhyming mother wits" in prologue to "Tamburlaine the Great," his first play.

5. Why does not Barabas, like Shylock, survive as a familiar figure in the conversation of educated people?

Does he, or does any other character in this play seem to you a distinct personality, easily recreated by your imagination? If not, can you tell why? Do you accept the judgment of Barabas on himself (Act I. sc. 2) and think him "framed of finer mould than common men"?

6. Marlowe's plays are universally acknowledged to have been epoch-making tragedies. Judging from this play, should you think this because of powerful single scenes, of sweetness of verse, of skill in construction of plot, of power in character-drawing, or because of some special originality of his own?

7. "Æschylus of the English stage," "the elder Shelley" are titles given to Marlowe by the critics. Why?

II. BIOGRAPHICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL.

1. Condition of the English Jew in Marlowe's time. Probable reasons for choice of subject? Story original, or probably borrowed? Marlowe's custom in this respect?

2. Some account of Edward Alleyn, the famous actor in Marlowe's leading rôles.

3. Marlowe's short life and its probable relation to his genius.

4. Where does the allusion in prologue to "Jew of Malta," "now the Guise is dead," fix the date of composition?

5. Leading events in Marlowe's life.

III. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

Symonds: Shakspeare's Predecessors in the English Drama.

Ellis: Preface and Appendix to "Marlowe" in "The Mermaid Series."

Philipson: The Jew in English Fiction.

TOPIC III.

BEN JONSON.

I. DIRECT STUDY.

1. Read the prologues to Jonson's plays, especially those prefixed to "Every Man in his Humour," "Every Man out of his Humour," "The Alchemist," and "Volpone," and say what you gather from these concerning

a. The author's primary purpose in writing plays.

b. His ideals of the mission of comedy.

c. His opinions of the methods of contemporary writers and managers.

d. His methods of composition.

2. Read "The Alchemist;" judging it from the author's own point of view, what do you think of it? Is it successful in presenting *humours* according to the meaning of the word *humour* in ancient dramatic language? In the management and progress of the story?

3. Probable reasons for Jonson's choice of subject. Is there any place for similar satire in present habits of mind?

4. What important differences separate this from all foregoing plays on our list thus far? What reasons inherent in Jonson's manner and matter, and in his ideals and methods generally, prevent his plays from holding a place on the modern stage?

5. Read the fragment "The Sad Shepherd," and state any new traits it may give you in estimating Jonson's powers. Cite any passages of marked beauty.

6. In either of these, or in any of Jonson's plays, is there any temptation to character-study? If not, why not? In general, what can you judge from the mere reading of the names of his *dramatis personæ*?

II. BIOGRAPHICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL.

1. Classification of Jonson's dramatic writings. In which class is his chief distinction? In what respect is he more original than any other English dramatist?

2. Circumstances in Jonson's life indicating that probably neither choice nor conduct of subject was commonly optional with himself?

3. Jonson's education as compared with his fellow playwrights. Advantages and disadvantages of this as affecting his composition.

4. Relations of Jonson and Shakespeare during their lives as fellow-craftsmen. "The Mermaid Club;" Shakespeare's part in Jonson's plays, etc.

5. History of the stage representation of Jonson's plays. His popularity as compared with Shakespeare during the hundred years succeeding their deaths.

References :

Saintsbury : Elizabethan Literature, pp. 174-184.

Various passages in Pepys' Diary.

Dryden : Essay of Dramatic Poesy.

III. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

Gifford : Memoir prefixed to Jonson's Works.

Symonds : Ben Jonson, in "English Writers Series."

Swinburne : A Study of Ben Jonson.

TOPIC IV.

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

I. DIRECT STUDY: PHILASTER.

1. What traces of ancestral grammar in such lines as

His tender eyes upon 'em he would weep,
As if he meant to make 'em grow again.

II. 2, 142, 143.

2. What is your judgment of Philaster's ready belief in the Princess' guilt? of his wounding of Bellario and Arethusa in the woods? How do these affect your estimate of the "brave prince Philaster," and of the play as a whole?

3. The character of Bellario was very popular in its day and served as a model for numbers of women-pages in subsequent plays. Do you find it pathetic or irritating? Compare with Viola in Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night."

4. Cite the fine passages in the play relating to —

a. Love.

b. Death.

c. Faithfulness to a trust.

d. Slander.

e. Royalty.

f. Sacredness of human life.

5. Coleridge called Beaumont and Fletcher "the most lyrical of our dramatists." Cite passages in illustration.

II. BIOGRAPHICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL.

1. Literary relations of Beaumont and Fletcher, and leading incidents of their lives?

2. What inducements to writing plays were lacking with them, although existing in the case of most of their contemporaries?

3. In respect to volume and variety of production, how do these men compare with others of their time?

4. How did contemporary critics rank these writers, and how does it compare with the verdict of posterity?

5. Why were their plays easier to place on the stage than Shakespeare's? What would be necessary in order to fit them for the stage in our day?

6. What modern play has been written out of "Rule a Wife and Have a Wife"?

III. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

Darley: Memoir prefixed to Works of Beaumont and Fletcher.

J. St. Leo Strachey: Beaumont and Fletcher, in "Mermaid Series."

Dryden: Essay of Dramatic Poesy, ed. Arnold, pp. 68, 69.

Leigh Hunt: Introduction to "Selections" in Bohn's Standard Library.

TOPIC V.

THE TWO NOBLE KINSMEN.

1. In respect to dramatic execution, do you notice any differences between the first and the last portions?

2. Do you find any signs of Shakespeare in this play? If so, in what respects,—plot, character-drawing, general tone, versification, or dialogue?

3. What features in the play recall "A Midsummer-Night's Dream"? "Macbeth"? "Cymbeline"?

4. Do you attribute these resemblances to Shakespeare repeating himself, or to imitations of his work by another hand?

5. Coleridge says, "There is no finer or more characteristic dramatic writing than some scenes in 'The Two Noble Kinsmen.'" Cite passages in illustration.

6. Read other forms of this story: "The Knight's Tale" in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales; Dryden's Poem, "Palamon and Arcite." Is the play in any respect inferior to the original Chaucer story? If so, at what point?

7. Reasons for assigning this play to the joint authorship of Fletcher and Shakespeare :

a. External evidences.

b. Internal evidences.

GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

Dowden : Shakspeare Primer, pp. 156, 157.

Schlegel : Dramatic Literature, pp. 471, 472.

Hallam : Literary History, Vol. III.

TOPIC VI.

THOMAS MIDDLETON AND WILLIAM ROWLEY.

[Thomas Middleton. Ed. Ellis.]

I. DIRECT STUDY: THE CHANGELING.

1. Meaning of "changeling" to Elizabethans; of "wench;" of "find," in Beatrice's "Pray, let me find you, sir" (Act II. sc. 2)?

2. What do such expressive, but now obsolete or rare words as "scrutinous," "exceptionous," "opportuneful," and many others used in this play show with respect to versatility of inflection in the Elizabethan speech in comparison with modern English?

3. Meaning of "He speaks *home*;" cite a similar usage from "Macbeth."

4. Explain the classical allusions, — as "orchard of th' Hesperides;" "Tiresias;" "Lacedæmonian," applied to Isabella.

5. Meaning of Euphuism, and its influence at this period? Traces of it in this play?

6. What connection between the two plots in this play? Can you not conceive them as originally designed for two distinct plays, and afterwards somewhat clumsily welded together?

7. Discuss the characters of Beatrice and De Flores. Of De Flores, Leigh Hunt said, "For effect at once tragical, probable, and poetical, it surpasses anything I know of in the drama of domestic life." Do you agree?

8. Note the finest passages, both for poetry and for sentiment. If Swinburne be right in assigning the first and the last scenes to Rowley, and the intermediate tragic action to Middleton, how do you rate the respective writers thereof?

9. Why is the play partly in prose and partly in verse?

II. HISTORICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL.

1. Joint authorship: is this play an exceptional case? Name other instances of the practice, either habitual or occasional, among dramatic writers of this period.

2. What explanations are offered for the strong resemblance between Middleton's "The Witch" and Shakespeare's "Macbeth"?

3. Besides these plays of Middleton and Shakespeare, name other instances of the English witch-drama. What was the ultimate (German) source of the traditions respecting witches, and through what English book did these become known to English dramatists?

Hudson: Preface to School edition of "Macbeth."

Herford: Literary Relations of England and Germany in the Sixteenth Century, pp. 231-238.

III. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

Swinburne: Introduction to Middleton, in "Mermaid Series;" *ibid.* *Nineteenth Century*, January, 1886.

Lamb: Characters of Dramatic Writers.

Saintsbury: Elizabethan Literature, pp. 266-272.

TOPIC VII.

JOHN WEBSTER.

I. DIRECT STUDY: DUCHESS OF MALFI.

1. Discuss the character of the Duchess. Does she seem to you an entirely virtuous woman?

2. Discuss the scene between Antonio and the Duchess (Act I. sc. 1). Do you agree with Thayer that "neither in the English Drama nor in English Fiction shall we find a scene in which womanly dignity and womanly love are exhibited more naturally than in this"?

3. Discuss the character of Antonio. Do you discover anything in him to justify the Duchess' devotion?

4. Discuss Act IV. sc. 2; point out any single lines of striking dramatic force; also the means used for giving extraordinary force and beauty to the whole scene.

5. Discuss the character of Bosola. Do you consider him a successful or a conceivable study?

6. Are the minor characters well-drawn?

7. "The Duchess of Malfi" has been called "superior to every other Elizabethan tragedy except the best of Shakespeare's." Give your own opinion.

II. BIOGRAPHICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL.

1. Sources of the play. Date of its first publication, and of its first representation on the stage.

2. Names of other plays of which Webster was author either in part or in whole?

3. What indications that his merits were appreciated by contemporaneous critics?

4. Webster and Tourneur have been called "artists in the Tragedy of Blood": who was the originator of this type of writing; is it ever employed by Shakespeare?

III. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

Symonds: Introduction to Webster in "Mermaid Series."

Swinburne: Webster in *The Nineteenth Century*, June, 1886.

Lamb: Characters of Dramatic Writers.

TOPIC VIII.

PHILIP MASSINGER.

[Philip Massinger. Ed. Symons.]

I. DIRECT STUDY: A NEW WAY TO PAY OLD DEBTS.

1. Note in the first act how much of the story comes to our knowledge by means of *narrative*, instead of through *action*. Is this a merit or a fault in Massinger's art as dramatist?

2. Explain, from your own feeling during the reading of this play, the probable reason why it still holds the stage.

3. Who is supposed to have been the original from whom the character of Overreach is drawn?

4. Discuss Massinger's blank verse; also Coleridge's statement that "the styles of Massinger's plays and the 'Samson Agonistes' are the two extremes of the arc within which the diction of dramatic poetry may oscillate."

5. Sir Giles as played by Edmund Kean shocked Mrs. Piozzi, and sent Lord Byron into hysterics. How much credit for the effect should you think due to actor; how much to writer?

II. HISTORICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL.

1. Effect of the change of dynasty on the spirit of the nation and consequently on the spirit of dramatic art in the time of Massinger?

2. With what others did Massinger join as collaborator?
3. Reason for the small remainder of the many plays written by Massinger?

III. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

S. T. Coleridge: *Shakespeare and other English Poets*, Bohn Library ed. pp. 403-407, 534.

Hazlitt: *Elizabethan Literature*, Bohn Library ed. pp. 131-136.

Hartley Coleridge: *Introduction to Massinger's Plays*.

Leslie Stephen: *Hours in a Library*. Third Series.

TOPIC IX.

THE ELIZABETHAN DRAMA. GENERAL RÉSUMÉ.

1. By common consent the Elizabethan drama stands alone in the history of the world's literature. Is your appreciation of Shakespeare heightened or lessened by this study of his contemporaries? Do you find in the others somewhat of the same qualities, or does he seem to you quite alone and beyond comparison?

2. It has been said (Gifford in *Introduction to "Massinger's Works"*) that Shakespeare's superiority to his contemporaries rests on his wit alone, while in the higher excellencies of character, pathos, depth of thought, etc., he is equalled by Beaumont and Fletcher, Ben Jonson, and Massinger. Discuss that statement.

3. Which of the foregoing dramatists seems to you most to resemble Shakespeare?

4. Shylock, Barabas, Sir Giles Overreach, — three miser studies by three nearly contemporaneous representative writers. Write a comparative study.

5. Consider the three characters from an artistic and dramatic point of view. Note the mixed motives shaping

the acts of Shylock, and, to a degree, Barabas, in contrast to the single passion of Sir Giles,—in this respect rather resembling the “Harpagon” of Molière, and the “Grandet” of Balzac. Which do you consider the finest and truest art?

6. Is the miser passion as popular in the fiction of modern times as formerly? Has the now habitual use of paper money, checks, etc., as a medium of exchange any influence on the suitableness of this subject for imaginative treatment?

TOPIC X.

JOHN MILTON.

[Comus. Ed. Browne.]

I. DIRECT STUDY: COMUS.

1. What conception of the universe is implied in the expressions “insphered” (l. 3), “’twixt high and nether Jove” (l. 20), “starry quire” (l. 112), “Indian steep” (l. 139), “sphery chime” (l. 1021)?

2. Note the passages that recall “The Tempest,” “Twelfth Night,” Fletcher’s “Faithful Shepherdess.”

3. Of what qualities do you consider the characters of the Lady and the two Brothers respectively the personification?

4. In what lines do you find the central thought of the poem?

5. Note the lines which illustrate Milton’s character; those which express his own philosophical sentiments.

6. Explain the mythological allusions, and note any points of departure from the original legends.

7. Discuss the lyrical portions of this drama; point out the passages of greatest charm, judged as *poetry*.

8. Has your study of the drama thus far disclosed any songs of equal beauty with these?

II. BIOGRAPHICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL.

1. Signification of the word *Comus* and its personification by Greek art?

2. Earlier plays similar in plot or in name to Milton's "*Comus*"?

3. Give some account of the occasion for the writing of "*Comus*;" the circumstances that suggested choice of subject; the first presentation; manner and date of publication.

4. The first edition was called on its title-page, "*A Maske*." Give some account of this kind of entertainment, and of the causes which brought about its decline. (See Symonds' "*Ben Jonson*," Chap. V. in "*English Writers Series*.")

5. "It was one of the caprices of fortune that made the future poet of the great Puritan epic the last composer of a cavalier mask." Explain the nature of that "caprice of fortune."

III. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

Macaulay: *Essay on Milton*.

Saintsbury: *Elizabethan Literature*, p. 321.

Hallam: *Literary History*, Vol. III.

TOPIC XI.

JOHN MILTON.

[*Samson Agonistes*. Ed. Collins.]

I. DIRECT STUDY: *SAMSON AGONISTES*.

1. In the preface, what evidences of Milton's feeling toward the romantic drama in general and the tragicomedies of his contemporaries in particular? What evidence of a wish to conciliate the Puritans?

2. What is the leading motive of this drama? In what lines do you find it?

3. Discuss the poem with reference to its historical importance, being the first of English tragedies based on classical models. Compare it with the Sophoclean drama in respect to —

- a.* Structure.
- b.* The three unities.
- c.* Ethical purpose.
- d.* Metaphysical conditions.

4. Discuss this drama for its evidences of the poet's own feelings and point out the passages which seem to bear upon his personal history and the events of the times in the following particulars:—

- a.* His blindness and sense of impending death.
- b.* His marriage relations.
- c.* His opinion of womankind in general.
- d.* Fate of the Regicides.
- e.* Cromwell.

II. BIOGRAPHICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL.

1. Compare the tragedy with the Bible story, and note the points of departure from it.

2. At what age did Milton conceive the intention of dramatizing some portion of the "Samson" story; probable reasons for the final choice of these last days of the hero, rather than the equally dramatic scenes of Samson's early life?

3. The political situation in England at this time; Milton's relation to it?

4. Personal surroundings at this time, home-life, physical state, financial condition?

5. "Samson Agonistes" arranged to a musical setting; date and author?

III. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

Pattison: Milton, in "English Men of Letters Series."

Johnson: Milton, in "Lives of the English Poets."

Hazlitt: Shakespeare and Milton, in "English Poets."

TOPIC XII.

HISTORICAL SURVEY OF THE ENGLISH DRAMA
IN ITS SECOND PERIOD.

1. Condition of the English theatre under Charles I. Names of the chief dramatists; their ideals; decline of Shakespeare's popularity, and reasons for the greater attractiveness of certain other dramatists. The king's appreciation of Shakespeare.

2. Closing of the theatres; relation of the players to the king; performances in private houses; oppression of all forms of mental entertainment, even of church music, by the Puritans.

3. The Restoration; re-opening of the theatres; reaction against republican principles and religious zeal; immorality of the times; imitation of the French; new appliances for external decoration; decline of real merit in the drama.

4. Sir William Davenant; his services to the newly organized institution. "Improvements" on Shakespeare by Davenant, Dryden, and others. Players' quartos.

5. Heroic plays.

6. Comedy of Manners.

7. Morals and intellect of the dramatists of this period, Etheredge, Otway, Lee, Vanbrugh, etc.

References:

Gosse: Eighteenth Century Literature, Chap. II.

Thackeray: English Humorists, Chap. II.

GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

Schlegel: Dramatic Literature, Lecture XXVIII.

Hazlitt: Lectures on the English Comic Writers.

Lamb: Artificial Comedy of the Last Century.

Dowden: Shakspeare Primer, pp. 159, 160.

TOPIC XIII.

JOHN DRYDEN.

[Select Dramatic Works of Dryden. Ed. Seton.]

I. DIRECT STUDY: ALL FOR LOVE.

1. Compare the play with its original, Shakespeare's "Antony and Cleopatra." Taking these two as typical respectively of the tragic manner of the Restoration and of the Elizabethan period, what is your opinion?

2. Compare "All for Love" (Act III. sc. 1) with "Antony and Cleopatra" (Act II. sc. 2), and note the differences with respect to delicacy in the handling of the subject.

3. In Dryden's play, what lack do you feel chiefly? Can you suggest any remedy; or is there inherent defect in the nature of the man?

4. Dryden's theories of dramatic composition as shown in his many prologues and epilogues; also in his "Essay of Dramatic Poesy"?

5. Point out the passages of high poetic beauty in this play.

II. BIOGRAPHICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL.

1. Number and classification of Dryden's plays.

2. Besides "Antony and Cleopatra," what other of Shakespeare's plays did Dryden imitate?

3. Reasons which led Dryden to play-writing; had he any spontaneous attraction in that direction?

4. Two periods of dramatic activity ; characteristics of each ?

5. Influence of the king's taste on Dryden's plays ?

6. Dryden compared with his fellow-playwrights in respect to literary merit.

7. Contemporary opinion of his plays ; their stage-history.

III. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

Saintsbury : Dryden, Chaps. III. and VI., "English Men of Letters Series."

Lowell : Dryden, in "Among My Books," Vol. I.

Macaulay : John Dryden, in "Essays."

TOPIC XIV.

WILLIAM WYCHERLEY.

[Wycherley. Ed. Ward.]

I. DIRECT STUDY : THE PLAIN DEALER.

1. Wycherley's chief claim to distinction rests upon the fact that he was the first to transfer the language of daily life to the stage, thus becoming the pioneer of our modern comedy. Discuss the dialogue. Does it seem to be a means of developing the characterization, or do the characters seem created for the sake of the dialogue ?

2. The Widow Blackacre has been called (by Voltaire) "the most comical character that was ever brought on the stage." Discuss that statement.

3. Wycherley undoubtedly painted the life of his time accurately ; do you judge that he sympathized with the low morality of his time, or did he write with the object of rebuking it ?

4. Both as to subject and style, "The Plain Dealer" is typical of the drama of this period, which turned

usually on love-suits and raillery. Even allowing for the coarseness of the age, what is your opinion of Wycherley's handling of his subject?

5. Hazlitt said, "The truth of feeling and the force of interest prevail over every objection;" and Lamb affirmed, "I feel the better for the perusal of one of these comedies." Discuss these statements.

6. What features recall portions of "Twelfth Night"?

II. BIOGRAPHICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL.

1. Give some account of the relations between Pope and Wycherley.

2. Describe Wycherley's contemporary reputation as shown by Dryden's praise of him, and by Evelyn's prophecy, —

"As long as men are false, and women vain,
While gold continues to be virtue's bane,
In pointed satire Wycherley shall reign."

III. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

Chas. Lamb: *The Artificial Comedy of the Last Century*.

Macaulay: *Comic Dramatists of the Restoration*.

Hazlitt: *Lectures on the English Comic Writers*.

TOPIC XV.

WILLIAM CONGREVE.

[Congreve. Ed. Ewald.]

I. DIRECT STUDY: LOVE FOR LOVE.

1. Discuss the sentiment of this play. Is it genuine or superficial?

2. Discuss the wit of the play, and Macaulay's statement (1841) that "the wit of Congreve far outshines

that of every comic writer, except Sheridan, that has arisen within the last two centuries."

3. Discuss the plot. Is it interesting in itself? natural in its development?

4. Discuss the characterization. Does this play justify the statement that "the persons of Congreve's stage are too uniformly brilliant for credence"?

5. This is the only one of Congreve's plays that held its place on the stage for any considerable time. What are the secrets of its popularity?

6. Discuss Macaulay's comparison of Congreve with Wycherley, in his essay "Comic Dramatists of the Restoration."

II. BIOGRAPHICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL.

1. Give some account of the reception of "Love for Love," and its effect on Congreve's future prospects.

2. Congreve's relations with Dryden, Pope, Voltaire, and other distinguished contemporaries?

3. Publication of Collier's "Short View of the Profaneness and Immorality of the English Stage;" Congreve's defence of himself and his fellow-playwrights; effect of the discussion on Congreve's later pursuits, and on the tone of dramatic writing in general?

4. Influence of Molière on this type of plays?

5. State of English drama for the ensuing century?

III. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

Macaulay: *Comic Dramatists of the Restoration.*

Thackeray: *English Humorists.*

Leigh Hunt: *Introduction to Congreve's Works.*

TOPIC XVI.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

[*She Stoops to Conquer.* Ed. Morley.]

I. DIRECT STUDY: SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER.

1. After the Restoration period and before Goldsmith, the drama degenerated into the "sentimental comedy," of no value as literature. What new element appears in this play, as distinguished from both the sentimental comedy and the comedy of manners?

2. What scenes in the play indicate Goldsmith's own opinion of the sentimentalists and their dread of anything "low"?

3. What qualities in Goldsmith's style enabled him to carry out his purpose "to raise a hearty laugh," while refraining from coarseness on the one hand and prudery on the other?

4. Had any similar character to Tony Lumpkin appeared in comedy-writing? Do you trace any resemblance to a certain character of Wycherley's?

5. Scarcely any other comedy retains its hold on popularity like this, notwithstanding that its construction is less artistic than many others. Analyze the elements that contribute to this result.

II. BIOGRAPHICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL.

1. What considerations turned Goldsmith toward dramatic writing, and what play had he written previous to "*She Stoops to Conquer*"?

2. Goldsmith's habit of turning his own experiences to literary account as illustrated by the subject of this play?

3. Goldsmith's struggles to secure its presentation on the stage; the co-operation of his friends; reception by the public?

4. Give some account of the personal controversies and professional jealousies arising from the success of "She Stoops to Conquer."

5. Effect of the success of this play on "Sentimental Comedy"?

III. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

Black: Goldsmith, in "English Men of Letters Series."

Thackeray: English Humorists.

Masson: Introduction to Goldsmith's Works.

TOPIC XVII.

RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN.

[Sheridan's Plays. Ed. Dircks.]

I. DIRECT STUDY: A SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL.

1. Study the dialogue of this play: applying to it that rule of dramatic composition which requires the omission of everything which does not help on the action, how does it stand the test?

2. Can you cite any instances from other dramatists where epigram and jest seem to grow so naturally out of the circumstances?

3. Discuss the plot, or rather the plots of the play; do the scandal scenes seem to you unimportant to the main interest?

4. Sheridan possessed an unusual instinct for a striking situation. Point out any scenes, which, even detached from their setting, would still hold their interest.

5. Discuss Act IV., sc. 1. Why is such a character as Charles Surface so great a favorite on the stage, and why does it command a sympathy that would be withheld in actual life?

6. Discuss Act IV., sc. 3, and the high art with which its successive disclosures are managed.

7. Do you consider Act V. inferior to the rest of the play; or would Act IV. form a more fitting conclusion?

8. Sheridan's humor contrasted with the humor of "She Stoops to Conquer"?

II. BIOGRAPHICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL.

1. Give some account of Sheridan's indebtedness to his predecessors, both French and English, for the characters in his plays. Does this impair his claim to be considered a truly original writer?

2. Explain Sheridan's relations to Drury Lane Theatre; circumstances attending the writing and production of the "School for Scandal;" reception by the public.

3. Early termination of Sheridan's career as dramatist. Give some account of his methods of composition; of his ambitions, literary and otherwise.

III. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

Whipple: Sheridan, in "Essays and Reviews," Vol. II.

Mrs. Oliphant: Sheridan, in "English Men of Letters Series."

Sanders: Sheridan, in "Great Writers Series."

TOPIC XVIII.

SIR E. BULWER LYTTON.

[Dramas and Poems.]

I. DIRECT STUDY: RICHELIEU.

1. Discuss Act I.; is it well managed to secure the desired effect at the opening of a play; *i.e.*, do the characters and the situation disclose themselves through the dialogue?

2. Note the fine passages relating to —

a. Love.

b. Patriotism.

3. Act II.; discuss the art with which the author has selected those aspects of Cardinal Richelieu's career and character which could be made most effective for dramatic treatment, while still adhering to historic truth.

4. Act III.; does its conclusion seem satisfactory to you? Do you think a band of conspirators likely to be satisfied with no better evidence of the actual death of Richelieu?

5. In the two closing acts, do you feel that the play loses somewhat of its charm by reason of the fact that the fortunes of Richelieu occupy so much larger space than the fortunes of the lovers?

6. Would the play have been improved by making the final victory for Richelieu depend more upon the success of his own unerring machinations, and less upon the humble devices of the young François?

7. Discuss the *poetical* qualities of the play; what is your opinion of the versification?

8. No modern play ranks with "Richelieu" as a stage classic. Is this because of the poetical wording, of the variety and individuality of the characterization, of the theatrical interest of the story?

II. BIOGRAPHICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL.

1. Give some account of Macready's co-operation with Bulwer in the writing of this play.

2. Private readings of "Richelieu;" stage presentation; reception by the public.

References:

Earl of Lytton: The Stage in Relation to Literature, *Fortnightly Review*, 1885.

Archer: Macready, in "Famous Actors Series."

Macready: Reminiscences.

TOPIC XIX.

ALFRED TENNYSON.

I. DIRECT STUDY: QUEEN MARY.

1. Discuss Tennyson's characterization of illustrious historical personages:—

a. Queen Mary. — In general, the historians have awakened very little sympathy for this character. Is the same thing true of her as heroine of this play? If not, by what means has Tennyson aroused our interest without departing from historical data?

b. King Philip. — What are the predominant traits of this character? Note the means taken to disclose these, and say whether they furnish evidence of dramatic genius in Tennyson.

c. Reginald Pole. — The character of a suave and selfish ecclesiastic has been frequently chosen by the dramatists. Has Tennyson been successful in his portraiture?

2. Motive of the play. — State what you find to be the main motive. Has this sufficient tragic dignity and interest for dramatic purposes?

3. Point out any scenes in the play which seem to show an instinct for "situations."

4. The highest triumph of the historic dramatist consists in setting us amid the life of the times he represents and in making us see its people "in their habits as they lived." Is "Queen Mary" successful in this respect?

5. It has been said that "taken altogether as an historic drama, 'Queen Mary' must rank not below,

perhaps even above, Shakespeare's 'Henry VIII.'" Discuss that statement.

6. Would "Queen Mary" make a good acting drama? If not, why not?

II. BIOGRAPHICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL.

1. Date of the writing of this play? Probable reasons why Tennyson made this new departure in form of poetry at so late a period in his life?

2. Give some account of Tennyson's other dramatic writing; instances of stage presentation.

III. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

Van Dyke: The Poetry of Tennyson.

Cooke: Poets and Problems.

TOPIC XX.

ROBERT BROWNING.

[A Blot in the 'Scutcheon. Ed. Rolfe.]

I. DIRECT STUDY: A BLOT IN THE 'SCUTCHEON.

1. Aristotle (Poetics, Chap. VI.) speaks of the effect of tragedy in *purifying* through terror and pity. Make the application in the present instance.

2. In the conflicting passions of this play, what element of the treatment warrants the description applied to Mildred, "depth of purity immovable"?

3. Does a sin always argue moral depravity? If not, why? Do you make any distinction between ignorance of evil and conscious virtue? From which state did Mildred lapse? Compare her in this respect with Margaret in "Faust." Compare Mildred's "I was so young. I had no mother," with Margaret's "I'm still so young" in the dungeon scene of "Faust."

4. Have you any criticisms relating to style and language in the opening scene?

5. What do you think of Mertoun's dying speech (Act III. sc. 1)? Is such an overwhelming love and reverence common or easily understood?

6. What is the leading motive of the play? Single or complex in the means of developing the tragedy?

7. Dickens declared he would rather have written "A Blot in the 'Scutcheon" than any other work of modern times. Do you sympathize with this enthusiasm?

8. History of the stage presentation of this play in England; of its stage adaptation and performance by Lawrence Barrett in America.

References:

Cooke: Browning Guide-Book, pp. 61-67.

Gosse: Browning Personalia, pp. 59-69.

Rolfe: A Blot in the 'Scutcheon and other Dramas. Introduction and Notes.

TOPIC XXI.

ROBERT BROWNING.

[A Blot in the 'Scutcheon. Ed. Rolfe.]

I. DIRECT STUDY: COLOMBE'S BIRTHDAY.

1. Significance of the motto from Hanmer, on title-page?

2. Leading idea of the play?

3. Was love or was patriotism the ruling motive in the mind of Valence?

4. Was Colombe "in love" with Valence from the start; or did this feeling grow upon her gradually or even unconsciously?

5. In the questions and reflections of Colombe following Valence's speech "I love and know" to the close of Act IV. what successive feelings do you trace?

6. Do you accept the courtier's view of the impossibility of restoring lost confidence (Act IV.)?

7. Explain the speech of Valence "All done was done for her — To humble me!"

8. Could Berthold — can any one — "reason himself into a rapture" (Act V.)?

9. Does Colombe's character develop in the course of the play? Is it an uncommon experience for "hours to do the work of years" in a life?

10. In what essential respect does the motive of this play differ from motives usual in the drama?

11. It has been said that "if this play be too fine for the stage, the fault is that our actors are too coarse." Discuss that statement.

12. History of the stage presentation of this play.

References:

Cooke: Browning Guide-Book, pp. 101-103.

Gosse: Browning Personalia, pp. 69-73.

Rolfe: Select Dramas, Introduction and Notes.

TOPIC XXII.

ROBERT BROWNING.

I. DIRECT STUDY: LURIA.

1. The character of Luria. Trace the influence of nationality, education, and circumstances in producing the divided sympathies of which he is himself conscious.

2. Compare Luria with Othello, both as to resemblances and differences.

3. Discuss Braccio's theory of the growth of a State and the subserviency of individuals,—“Florence exists because these pass away,” etc. (Act III.) What modern thinkers share this view?

4. Discuss Tiburzio's doctrine of the superiority of the individual over the State,—“A people is but the attempt of many,” etc. (Act V.). What moderns are expounders of this position?

5. What fine tribute to the unconsciousness of true greatness? Compare the thought with the opening pages of Carlyle's essay, “Characteristics.”

6. What testimony to the respective values of the rewards attendant upon success?

II. HISTORICAL.

1. Give some account of the struggle between Florence and Pisa in 1406 which furnishes the historical setting of this play.

2. In what respects does the play depart from history?

3. In what respects is it true to the political life of the period?

References:

Cooke: Browning Guide-Book, pp. 198, 199.

Symons: Introduction to the Study of Browning.

TOPIC XXIII.

ROBERT BROWNING.

I. DIRECT STUDY: IN A BALCONY.

1. Outline the story of the play.

2. Which character most interests you? Why?

3. Which is the truest *lover*? Discuss the matter of true and false tests of love.

4. Is love transferable according to the plan of Constance?

5. Would Constance herself have followed the course she recommended to Norbert? Do not women sometimes accept a lower standard for men than for themselves?

6. Does the end of the play satisfy you?

7. Fate of the characters according to your own fancy?

8. What features of the writing atone for the narrowness of its balcony-stage with its critical moments for each of the characters? Quote the passages of beautiful description of Nature.

9. Notable thoughts and epigrammatic utterances.

10. Do you agree with Constance that "women hate a debt as men a gift"?

11. Discuss the character of the Queen, and explain the elements which justify Symons's description of her part in the play as "among the great situations in literature."

12. Moral lessons of "In a Balcony"?

TOPIC XXIV.

ROBERT BROWNING.

I. DIRECT STUDY: IN A BALCONY; CHARACTER OF CONSTANCE.

1. Does Constance's proposal to relinquish Norbert show her to have been lacking in love for him?

2. Was that act noble and magnanimous, or does it prove an insincere and inconstant nature?

3. Was her love true and intense up to the measure of her capacity; or was the *quality* defective?

4. Can you extenuate Constance for insulting the man she meant to honor, and for wronging the woman to whom she owed everything?

5. Did Norbert read her aright in saying "Was this your love's mad trial to o'ertop mine," etc.?

6. How could Constance be so mistaken in both the Queen and Norbert as events proved her to have been?

7. Does Constance's willingness to resign Norbert come from cowardice, or from a self-denying nature equal to any demand made upon it?

8. Is it femininely, or even humanly, possible that pity for the Queen could outweigh love, if really *love*?

9. Do Browning's women, especially Mildred, Constance, and the Queen, seem to you any less real than Shakespeare's women?

10. This was the last of Browning's works written in dialogue, and has the appearance of beginning in the middle of the plot. Compare its verse with the more formal dramas and give your opinion.

TOPIC XXV.

BROWNING AS A DRAMATIST.

1. Are the subjects of the five foregoing studies *dramas* in the ordinary acceptance of the term; that is, have they power to represent action, passion, and character on the stage?

2. Browning's own statement of his dramatic purpose is — "to reverse the method usually adopted . . . by the operation of *persons and events*; instead of having recourse to the external machinery of incidents . . . I have ventured to display somewhat minutely *the*

mood itself in its rise and progress." Is he successful in his own aim? Is he or is he not faithful in portrayal of the inner workings of mind?

3. Do such ideals come within the scope of stage presentation? Are the material means of the actual theatre competent to deal with such purposes?

4. It has been said that "all of Browning's characters are but different mouthpieces of the poet himself." Discuss that statement, and compare Browning with Shakespeare in respect to impersonality.

5. Compare Browning with Shakespeare with respect to the power to concentrate action on a few salient points, and to develop a "situation" or a scenic catastrophe.

6. Compare Browning with Shakespeare with respect to artistic selectiveness;—the power to determine the relative importance of events by the manner in which they impress the imagination and bear on the catastrophe.

7. Does Browning's failure to produce plays that have held the stage deprive him of the right to be ranked among the great dramatic writers?

8. Dramatic power distinguished from play-writing power. Can you cite any instances of successful acting-plays unless written either by those having direct personal knowledge of the stage or else in collaboration with some one who had such knowledge?

TOPIC XXVI.

THE PLACE OF THE DRAMA IN LITERATURE.

1. Noted definitions of Drama:

- a. Aristotle (Poetics, Chap. VI.)
- b. Shakespeare (Hamlet, Act III. sc. 2.)
- c. Dryden (Essay of Dramatic Poesy).

2. Tragedy and Comedy defined in their original signification. Gradual change of meaning. Beginning of tragi-comedy. Restricted use of the word *comedy* dating from the seventeenth century. Origin of *farce* in the eighteenth century.

3. Advantages of the dramatic form over other forms of literary expression. Compare with —

a. Epic poetry.

b. Lyric Poetry.

4. Is the drama more subject than other branches of literature to the influence of fashion?

5. Is there any correspondence between a flourishing drama and a prosperous social life?

References:

Schlegel: Dramatic Literature, Lectures II. III. XIII.

Shelley: Defence of Poetry.

Dryden: Heads of an Answer to Rymer.

TOPIC XXVII.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE DRAMA.

I. THE CLASSIC DRAMA.

1. The worship of Bacchus the germ of drama.
2. Influence of lyric poetry upon tragedy, as introduced by Arion (B.C. 600).
3. Influence of epic poetry on tragedy as introduced by Thespis (B.C. 535).
4. Introduction of the actor and the stage.
5. Blank verse and influence of satire in the drama.
6. Completion of the process; characterization of the chorus.

II. THE ROMANTIC DRAMA.

1. Story supercedes drama in popular interest during the Middle Ages.
2. Popular mediæval drama as acted story.
3. The Renaissance ; rise of romantic out of popular drama, by the application of classical form to romance matter.
4. Value of the romance element to the romantic drama of the classic element.
5. Struggle of the romantic drama against classic criticism.

III. COMPARISON OF THESE LEADING TYPES OF DRAMATIC ART WITH RESPECT TO—

1. Ideals ; classic drama aims at an ideal picture ; romantic drama aims to depict real life.
2. Methods ; compare the differences as to scenery, costumes, actors, dialogue.
3. Structure ; divisions of the classic drama compared with those of the romantic drama.
4. Rules ; The Three Unities. Classic drama strives to reduce all to singleness ; romantic drama delights in multiplicity of matter and interest.

References :

Moulton : *The Ancient Classical Drama*, Chaps. I. and XII.

Hazlitt : *Elizabethan Literature*, ed. Bohn, pp. 243 fol.

Coppleston : *Introduction to Æschylus* in "Ancient Classics."

Schlegel : *Dramatic Literature*, Chaps. IV. V. VI.

TOPIC XXVIII.

PRINCIPLES OF DRAMATIC COMPOSITION.

I. CONDITIONS REQUISITE TO A SUCCESSFUL ACTING
DRAMA WITH RESPECT TO—

1. Choice of subject; should concern objects of more than ordinary interest, and tend toward and terminate in some striking result, "The upper air of poetry is the atmosphere of sorrow." Discuss that statement.

2. Knowledge of the stage. Brander Matthews says: "For a poetic play to have a success, it must be the work of one who is both poet and playwright; who is, in fact, playwright first and poet after." Cite illustrations in proof of this.

3. Self-effacement of the writer. The dramatist must often put into the mouths of his characters sentiments distasteful to himself; his own sentiments must be judged by the spirit of the whole.

4. Development and inter-action of characters; they must be real human beings, not puppets pulled by a single wire.

5. Style and language of characters; must be varied to suit every change of character and situation. Examples of success or failure in this respect.

II. RELATION OF THE HISTORIC DRAMA TO AUTHENTIC
HISTORY. TRUTH OF CHARACTER MORE IM-
PORTANT THAN TRUTH OF FACT.

References :

Schlegel: Dramatic Literature, Lecture II.

Macaulay: Essay on Dryden.

Lessing: Dramatic Notes, Nos. 19, 32, 33.

Reed: English History Illustrated by Shakespeare, Chap. I.

Fitzgerald: The Art of the Stage.

TOPIC XXIX.

CONDITIONS REQUISITE TO A NATIONAL DRAMA.

I. GENERAL CONDITIONS WITH RESPECT TO —

1. The nation at large, the social and political atmosphere.
2. The policy of rulers.
3. Actors.
4. Dramatic genius among writers.
5. Nature and intellect of audiences.

II. APPLICATION OF THE FOREGOING PRINCIPLES TO NOTABLE EXAMPLES OF FLOURISHING NATIONAL DRAMAS.

1. Greece in the fifth century, B.C.
2. England in the sixteenth century, A.D. Minute examination of the history of the period with reference to all the foregoing requisites.

References :

Symonds: *Studies of the Greek Poets*, Vol. II., pp.

11-15.

Grimm: *Life and Times of Goethe*, pp. 96, 97.

Guizot: *Shakespeare and his Times*, pp. 9-24, 124-157.

Taine: *English Literature*, Vol. I. Bk. ii.

Hazlitt: *Elizabethan Literature*, Lecture I.

TOPIC XXX.

CAUSES OF DECLINE IN THE ENGLISH DRAMA.

I. IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

1. Coarse frivolity of the times.
2. Action of the Puritan rulers.
3. Reaction against Puritanism.

References :

Taine : English Literature, Vol. II. Bk. iii.

Ward : History of the Drama, Vol. II. Chap. ix.

II. IN THE PRESENT TIME.

1. Neglect of dramatic composition by the best writers.

2. Neglect of national subjects in favor of foreign imitations.

3. Costliness of modern stage-mounting.

4. Conditions of modern life whereby the novel now partially fills the place once supplied by the play.

References :

The Earl of Lytton : The Stage in Relation to Literature, *Fortnightly Review*, 1885.

Matthew Arnold : The French Play in London, in "Irish Essays and Others."

Quilter : The Decline of the Drama, *Contemporary Review*, April, 1887.

Mowbray Morris : Essays in Dramatic Criticism.

III. REASONS FOR THE CULTIVATION OF THE DRAMATIC POEM RATHER THAN THE ACTING DRAMA BY LIVING WRITERS OF DISTINCTION.



IX.

INTRODUCTORY TO THE STUDY OF POETRY.

POETRY, as the subject of class study, is likely to meet with two classes of objectors: first, those who maintain that the chief mission of poetry is to please the ear, and who consider life too short to spend many of its precious hours with the poets; and second, those who insist that poetry is essentially a mystery, that its charm can no more be analyzed than it can be created again at pleasure, that the attempt simply robs poetry of its bloom, and places those who undertake it in the ranks of those that would "peep and botanize upon a mother's grave."

In order to meet the first objection, let us consider briefly the nature and function of poetry in general, and its place in education and life. Attempts at a definition of poetry abound

during all the ages from Aristotle to Matthew Arnold, offering sufficient variety and unlimited freedom of choice. But, at present, we shall be concerned less to find some exact phrase which shall include all the elements that go to make up a perfect poem than to find whether we can afford to leave it out of our daily lives. We have to consider such questions as these : —

By what spell has it been that, beginning with the earliest dawn of historic thought, poetry has held the highest post of honor? Why were songs sung before books were written? Why did the cadence of the bard, mournful or exultant, have power to sustain and inspire humanity in its fierce struggle for existence? Why do some languages, as that of the early Hebrews, furnish but one word for both *poet* and *prophet*? Why is it that no one can read any noble poem without an elevation of all his faculties, without feeling that the whole universe “grows life, grows love”?

Of all attempts to answer these and such like questions, none seem to me to go nearer the root of the matter than a sentence I remember to have seen somewhere : “The poet is one who sees the Infinite in things.” True, not the poet alone, but the great artist of any kind — the painter, sculptor, architect, musician — also sees the Infinite in things ; but the poet uses a

more universal language than the others, and therefore appeals to more persons, and more directly. "Great thoughts insure musical expressions," says Emerson. "I advise any one who *can* speak his thought *not* to sing it," says Carlyle ; implying that there are some thoughts too high to be uttered in prose.

Taking poetry in this high sense, not as a word descriptive of metrical composition, but as the utterance of those who see things "more clearly, widely, and fully than they are seen by the common eye," and who, seeing, are so enraptured with the vision that the words pour forth, sometimes in regularly measured speech, sometimes with a force so fiery as to melt all moulds into which the poet would fain run them, as was the case with the old Hebrew prophets, — then poetry is to be counted not as a pleasant pastime for moments of leisure, but as ranking very high in the list of serious studies. According to Sainte-Beuve, "In every man there is a poet who dies young." I suppose he would account for this devastating mortality by such causes as the influence of early education, of artificial and conventional life, of worldly business demands. It behooves us who have, to a degree, lost our visions of the Infinite, to hold fast to those who with more penetrating and finer minds can give us the advantage of their divina-

tion or insight into the deep things of life, its mysteries of feeling, motive, and thought. If we have eyes that see not and ears that hear not the things that are before and around us, if life seem to us weary and commonplace, our daily associations trivial and unimportant, let us listen to the poets and learn of the ideal that lurks in even the homeliest forms, learn that nothing is trivial that increases our acquaintance with the human heart, nothing unimportant that reveals to us the dignity and divinity in which all our affectionate relations to life are enshrined. He who opens our eyes to the fair and goodly possibilities in human life, and especially he who finds them in what we are accustomed to call our prosaic age, is a prophet and a benefactor, deserving immortally our homage and our thanks. This, then, is my apprehension of the proper place of poetry in education and life. So long as we have souls, so long as we live in a universe of beauty and majesty, and have power to feel, so long shall we need the poets. Life without poetry is not life, for it has no soul.

We have next to meet the objection which rests on the *indefinable* quality of poetry; the claim that if its properties could be gauged and named by its admirers it would prove it to be no poetry at all. This plea is strongest in the case of lyric poetry, or as a good friend once

said to me, "To call upon a class to examine one of Shelley's lyrics is like organizing a class to hear a thrush sing." This would have more weight if the gift of natural sensitiveness were more common ; or if, where it is ample in some directions, it were also more extended in range.

"O lyric song, there will be few, think I,
Who may thy import understand aright,
Thou art for *them*, so arduous and so high."

says Dante.

Moreover, this objection assumes that poetical effects are due more to accident, less to studied devices on the poet's part than facts go to prove. One has only to examine the original manuscripts of the great poets, to be found in some of the old libraries, in order to discover the severe processes which have produced these perfect results. In some of them every line is slashed and scarred with endless corrections. Five, six, seven stories high, qualifying adjectives are piled up, one on top of another, simply to be remorselessly sacrificed in order to make way for the one faultless epithet, whose fitness and beauty will make it live forever.

Also it needs to be shown that every poem worthy of the name has its motive, either simple, as in the lyric usually, or complex, as in the drama almost always. Coleridge must be granted as pretty high authority in such a matter,

and in enumerating the chief items of his indebtedness to his beloved master at Christ's Hospital, James Bowyer, he says: "I learned from him that poetry, even that of the loftiest and, seemingly, that of the wildest odes has a logic of its own, as severe as that of science: and more difficult, because more subtle, more complex, and dependent on more and more fugitive causes. 'In the truly great poets,' he would say, 'there is a reason assignable not only for every word but for the position of every word.'" To find this "logic of its own" is what must chiefly concern the student of poetry. Often this is a very simple matter, but much more often it is one to tax all our powers. As Dowden has said, "To study any great author is to traverse a difficult mountain range; or if he be an author of vast width, as Goethe was, it is to traverse a series of mountain-ranges. A modest pedestrian, if he desire before nightfall to reach some definite point (and the night at farthest is not far off), may rejoice to be saved from objectless wanderings, or to be turned aside from entering a *cul-de-sac*."

I am aware of the dangers attending those who offer themselves as guides. Too often is the charge of Swinburne justified: "The great poets of England are now constantly served up in text-books, in order that boys may win prizes

and students pass examinations. Every allusion is explained, every sentence has to be parsed, every grammatical peculiarity studied ; and the result of all this discipline is to make our English poets as much hated by the average student as Horace was hated by Lord Byron." Yet is not a golden mean possible between a method which produces such sad results, and one which declares that poetry is above and beyond all approach by the critical faculty? May it not be true that what the poet has done by a special, splendid, incommunicable instinct may not always be apparent at the first glance ; that the longer we gaze at it, and the more closely we inquire into its inner nature, the more shall its superiority become apparent ; and that only thus can we share in that nearer vision of the Infinite which it is the special mission of poetry to reveal.





X.

OUTLINES OF THE STUDY OF ENGLISH POETRY.



THE most valuable of the books for general use throughout this course is Ward's "English Poets." A smaller work, containing a very large number of the poems included in the following study, is Hales's "Longer English Poems." In the choice of writings below, complete works have been preferred to disjointed fragments, except in such cases as "The Faërie Queene" and "The Task," where the author's best work has also been his longest, — and too long for this scheme of study. The small type references following the subject indicate the most desirable editions for the student's use ; these have been omitted in the case of the modern poets, since their works are generally accessible and to be found in almost any library. Minto's "English Poets" furnishes valuable commentary on the period between Chaucer and Shelley.

TOPICS.

- I. Geoffrey Chaucer.
- II. Edmund Spenser.
- III. Edmund Spenser.
- IV. William Shakespeare
- V. William Shakespeare.
- VI. Robert Herrick.
- VII. George Herbert.
- VIII. John Milton.
- IX. John Milton.
- X. General Survey of Seventeenth Century Poetry.
- XI. John Dryden.
- XII. Alexander Pope.
- XIII. Alexander Pope.
- XIV. Samuel Johnson.
- XV. William Collins.
- XVI. Thomas Gray.
- XVII. Oliver Goldsmith.
- XVIII. Robert Burns.
- XIX. William Cowper.
- XX. Samuel Taylor Coleridge.
- XXI. William Wordsworth.
- XXII. William Wordsworth.
- XXIII. Sir Walter Scott.
- XXIV. Lord Byron.
- XXV. John Keats.
- XXVI. Percy B. Shelley.
- XXVII. Elizabeth Barrett Browning.
- XXVIII. Alfred Tennyson.
- XXIX. Alfred Tennyson.
- XXX. Alfred Tennyson.

TOPIC I.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

[Prologue to Canterbury Tales. Ed. Skeat.]

I. DIRECT STUDY: PROLOGUE TO CANTERBURY TALES.

1. What constitutes the chief charm of this prologue, — the story itself and the manner in which it is unfolded; or the style, language, and peculiar humor of the author; or the picture of contemporary aspects and classes of English society?

2. What evidence do you find in it of Chaucer's broad range of human sympathies?

3. Taking these portraits severally, what insight do they give concerning —

a. The religious life of the times, and the direction of Chaucer's own sympathies?

b. The English yeomen and their new importance in the State?

c. The knighthood of the Middle Ages?

d. The fashionable manners?

e. Characteristics of the begging friars?

f. Characteristics of the student-class?

g. The typical country squire?

h. The landlord and his importance in the community?

4. Cite the evidences of Chaucer's responsiveness to the influences of external nature.

II. BIOGRAPHICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL.

1. Source of Chaucer's conception of the plan of Canterbury Tales?

2. Appropriateness of the description of Chaucer's language as "well of English undefiled"?

3. Name the leading authors earlier than Chaucer, and explain why their writings are interesting rather to the philologist than to the student of English literature.

4. Mention some of the most important of the numerous imitations and adaptations of Chaucer by later authors.

5. Describe the "Chaucerian stanza" as used by Chaucer in "The Man of Lawe's Tale." In what notable poems has it been employed by later writers?

III. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

Lowell: Chaucer, in "My Study Windows."

Ward: Chaucer, in "The English Poets."

Matthew Browne: Chaucer's England.

TOPIC II.

EDMUND SPENSER.

[The Faërie Queene. Ed. Kitchin.]

I. DIRECT STUDY: THE FAËRIE QUEENE, BOOK I. CANTOS 1-6.

1. State briefly in prose the argument of the first six cantos of "The Faërie Queene."

2. The moral reflections heading each canto; what Italian models did Spenser follow in this?

3. Spenser was one of the most learned of all English poets. Cite the passages which show his familiarity with ancient and modern literature.

4. Spenser has been called an "epicure in language;" cite passages in evidence, and also others that show he had not quite shaken off the bluntness of phrase of the preceding generation.

5. Spenser wrote for an age that scorned poetry. What features of the poem are probably due to a wish to recommend it to the Court and to the Queen?

6. What features are due to a more weighty and enduring purpose, as expressed in his dedicatory letter to Sir Walter Raleigh?

7. As a narrative, what merits or defects do you find in these cantos?

8. The account of the "battels end" promised at the close of Canto VI. was never resumed, though it probably would have been had the work been finished. Discuss the defects of such a method in narrative, from the point of view of literary art.

9. Give the explanation of the double allegory and the signification, religious, political, moral, or personal, of the leading characters thus far, — Faërie Queene, Red Cross Knight, Una, Duessa, Corceca, etc.

10. What are the highest qualities of an allegorical poem? Does "The Faërie Queene" stand this test? Can you name other poems more successful from this point of view?

11. Spenser was fond of expanding simple thoughts and images. Cite some notable instances from these cantos.

TOPIC III.

EDMUND SPENSER.

I. DIRECT STUDY: THE FAËRIE QUEENE, BOOK I., CANTOS 7-12.

1. State briefly in prose the argument of these cantos.

2. In what stanza do you find the central thought of the poem expressed?

3. Reasons for Spenser's choice of King Arthur as the person most fit for the perfecting in the "twelve morall virtues" (see introductory letter to Raleigh).

4. Compare Spenser's classification with Aristotle's classification (see Aristotle's Ethics).

5. Do you consider the allegory a merit or a defect in the poem?

6. Study the metrical form, invented by Spenser for this poem and known thenceforward as the "Spenserian stanza." Describe its metrical arrangement as to feet, lines, rhyme, etc. Advantages of this form, in a long poem, over blank verse or the rhymed couplet or quatrain.

7. Note the language of the poem, more archaic than any other verse or prose-writing of the period. Probable reasons? Fitness of this dialect to the subject and the verse-form? Had Spenser any standard of authority corresponding to what we now call the "Queen's English"?

8. Spenser has been long known as the "poet's poet." Reasons for this appellation?

9. It has been said that "'The Faërie Queene' is the only long poem that a lover of poetry can wish longer." Do you agree?

II. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL.

1. Give some account of the general scheme of "The Faërie Queene," both in its finished and unfinished portions.

2. Effect of the publication of this poem on English poetry in general? (See Green's Short History of the English People, p. 424.)

III. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

Church: Spenser, in "English Men of Letters Series."

Taine: English Literature, Book III., Chap. 2, pp. 203-226.

Lowell: Spenser, in "Among my Books," Vol. II.

TOPIC IV.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

I. DIRECT STUDY: THE SONNETS, I.-CXXVI.

1. Quote the sonnets which reveal the writer's consciousness of his own power, and his belief in the immortality of his lines.

2. Quote those which indicate his scorn of the profession of actor.

3. Quote those which disclose his ideals of love, its undying quality, its superiority to all accidents of time or fortune.

4. Quote those which seem inspired by a sensitive observation of nature; by a love of music.

5. In the consecutive reading of these sonnets, do they impress you as a connected narrative of one man's emotions; if so, do these emotions belong to the writer, or is he simply telling the story of another? Are they addressed to one person or to different persons?

6. If the "begetter of these sonnets, Mr. W. H." means the person to whom they are addressed, as is commonly supposed, how do you explain the extremely ardent tone as the expression of one man to another?

7. Discuss the form of these sonnets, which has been described as "three four-fold strands of poesy, caught up and dexterously wound into a perfect circle by two shining threads of gold." At what date and by whom was the sonnet introduced into England; how does the Shakespearian sonnet differ from the Italian sonnet?

II. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL.

1. When is the first contemporaneous mention of these sonnets?

2. At what date was the present collection of one hundred and fifty-four sonnets first printed and by whom?
3. What reasons are there for supposing that their publication was not sanctioned by the author?

References :

Dowden : Shakespeare, His Mind and Art.
Rolfé : The Sonnets, *Shakespeareana*, March, 1889.

TOPIC V.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

I. DIRECT STUDY: THE SONNETS, CXXVI.-CLIV.

There is no more voluminous controversy in literature than the one that has grown up around these sonnets. Discuss, giving your own impressions from the evidence offered, the leading opinions as follows :—

1. That Shakespeare is relating his own experience, though without intending it for publication.
2. That the sonnets were composed in an assumed character, on different subjects, at different times, for the amusement of the author's intimate associates, and perhaps at their suggestion.
3. That Shakespeare intended to parody the fashionable love-philosophy of the day.
4. That they are mere exercises of the fancy, the "free outcome of a poetic imagination."
5. That the sonnets could only have come from a man deeply in love, and in love with a woman.
6. That "Mr. W. H." is Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, with initial letters reversed; that he is William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke; that he is Shakespeare's nephew; that Queen Elizabeth is celebrated

in this guise; that the "Dark Woman" is Mary Fitton, and can be traced through all the early plays; that the rival poet is Chapman; that some of the sonnets are addressed to Ann Hathaway.

7. That the sonnets, except for their autobiographical interest, are wearisome and uninteresting.

8. That the sonnets represent the high-water mark of English poetry, and that all autobiographical inquiry is profitless.

References:

Furness: The Study of Shakespeare, *Poet Lore*, March, 1889.

Brown: The Sonnets of Shakespeare Solved.

Mackay: The Mystery of Shakespeare's Sonnets, *Library Magazine*, Vol. VI., 1885.

TOPIC VI.

ROBERT HERRICK.

I. DIRECT STUDY.

Selections from "Hesperides" and "Noble Numbers:"—The Mad Maid's Song; To Anthea; Corinna's Going a-Maying; The Litany; A Thanksgiving to God.

1. Gosse says that Herrick was "a Pagan and a hedonist," and, as a writer of sacred poems, "an alien in the choir of divine singers which the seventeenth century produced." Mr. Saintsbury denies that Herrick was in any sense a Pagan, and claims that "the secular vigor of the 'Hesperides' and the spiritual vigor of the 'Noble Numbers' has rarely been equalled and never surpassed by any other writer." From the foregoing selections, what is your own view?

2. Describe Herrick's "environment," and show in what respects it was more favorable to poetic production than that of any of his contemporaries.

3. What rank should you assign to Herrick, tested by the thought contained in his poetry?

4. What rank, tested by expression? What was the prevailing fashion of the day with respect to verse-forms, and by whom was it set?

5. What place does Herrick hold among English pastoral poets, both with respect to the amount and the character of his lyrical poetry?

6. Reasons why Herrick fails to attain a place among the English poets of the first class?

II. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

Gosse: Herrick, in Ward's "English Poets;" also article in *Littell's Living Age*, Oct. 30, 1875.

Saintsbury: Elizabethan Literature, pp. 354-359.

TOPIC VII.

GEORGE HERBERT.

I. DIRECT STUDY.

Selections from "The Temple," — The Church-Porch; Virtue; Man; The Pilgrimage; The Pulley; The Elixir.

1. Judging from these or other selections from Herbert's most famous volume, what do you consider his distinguishing merit, — is it one rather of thought or of expression?

2. It is noticeable that the critics in general make but little account of Herbert's verse, some historians of English literature making but a bare mention of his

name, others omitting it altogether; yet he has always been a favorite with readers, many short passages are familiar to every one, while his contemporary reputation was greater than Milton's; probable reasons?

3. Aside from its own merits, mention any circumstances in English ecclesiastical history of the last half-century that may have helped to give "The Temple" its hold on popular esteem.

4. Herbert in "The Church-Porch" has been called a "precocious Polonius, framing a rule of life for himself and other pious courtiers, but without consecration;" others have recommended the poem as "worthy to be learned by heart by every young man." Which seems to you the juster judgment?

5. Of what later and more famous work is "The Pilgrimage" suggestive?

6. Herbert, among sacred poets, has been likened to Longfellow among the profane poets. Why?

II. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

Simcox: Herbert, in Ward's "English Poets."

Saintsbury: Elizabethan Literature, pp. 372, 373.

TOPIC VIII.

JOHN MILTON.

[Paradise Lost. Books I. and II. Ed. Sprague.]

I. DIRECT STUDY: PARADISE LOST, BOOK I.

1. Meaning of "rime" as used by Milton in his prose introduction; distinguished from "rhyme" as used by him in line 16, Book I.

2. Is Milton's seeming claim to entire originality (l. 16) strictly true? Previous writers, foreign and English, on the same subject?

3. Cosmography of the universe according to this book? (This however differs from that of some of the later books.)

4. Point out the passages which reveal Milton's individuality with respect to —

a. Puritanical attitude toward courts and palaces.

b. Dislike of city life.

c. Musical sensibilities.

d. Fondness for sonorous lists of proper names.

e. Inexactness in descriptions of external nature.

5. Quote the lines giving the central thought of the poem.

II. MILTON'S CHOICE OF SUBJECT.

1. Do you agree with Coleridge and Addison, who commend this choice because of its importance and general interest; or with Dryden, who condemns it because "the event is not prosperous, . . . his heavenly machines are many, and human persons but two"?

2. According to Aristotle's principles for the epic (*Poetics* VI.) demanding a *complex action*, how does Milton's subject compare with the subjects chosen by other great epic writers, Homer, Virgil, Tasso?

3. Nature of Milton's source of material compared with the sources of other great epic poets? Reasons why he could not indulge in the amplification and expansion allowable in other cases?

4. Means by which he has avoided inventing any new incident, and its effect on the poem as a work of art?

TOPIC IX.

JOHN MILTON.

I. DIRECT STUDY: PARADISE LOST, BOOK II.

1. It has been often said that Satan is the hero of "Paradise Lost." Cite the passages which compel your sympathy with Satan and his followers.

2. In what respects does Milton's Satan differ from the scriptural type of Satan?

3. Discuss the significance of the allegory of Sin and Death; might not some of its repulsive features have been spared with advantage?

II. PARADISE LOST CONSIDERED AS THE REALIZATION OF A LIFE PURPOSE.

1. Milton's early resolve; a national epic based upon the legends of prehistoric England.

2. Postponement of his designs, and considerations leading to the abandonment of his original subject.

3. Hesitation between the epic and dramatic forms of treatment.

4. Hesitation between the English and the Latin languages. Reasons for deciding to write in English.

5. Style of the poem; possible influence of the writer's blindness. Do you accept Macaulay's opinion (in essay on Dryden) that "the imagination is most active when the external world is shut out"?

6. Reception of "Paradise Lost" by the public; the political circumstances that delayed its cordial recognition; the means by which attention was first claimed for it as a classic. (See Addison's *Spectator*, No. 267 and seventeen Saturdays following.)

III. BIBLIOGRAPHY OF EPIC POETRY.

1. English literature possesses but this one great epic poem. Mention some attempts and failures by later writers.

2. Does the fact that the epics of the world are so few in number prove this to be the most difficult species of composition?

3. Do you agree with the statement that "the epic poem is, in its nature, the most noble of all poetic performances"?

IV. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE

Garnett: Milton, in "Great Writers Series."

Pattison: Milton, in "English Men of Letters Series."

Channing: Essay on Milton.

Johnson: Milton, in "Lives of the Poets."

Coleridge: Lectures on Shakespeare and Milton.

TOPIC X.

GENERAL SURVEY OF SEVENTEENTH CENTURY
POETRY.

[The English Poets. Ed. Ward, Vol. II.]

DIRECT STUDY.

1. Lovelace's *To Althea, and Going to the Wars*; Ben Jonson's *To Celia*; Waller's *Go, Lovely Rose*; Carew's *He that Loves a Rosy Cheek*; Cowley's *A Wish*.

a. What pre-eminence is given to love as a theme by poets of the early half of the seventeenth century, and what general characteristic pervades their handling of it?

2. Read selections from Cowley's "*The Mistress*" and discuss Johnson's statement that "they might have

been written for penance by a hermit, or for hire by a philosophical rhymers who had only heard of another sex."

3. Relation of these amatory poems to an illustrious Italian precedent.

4. Give some notable examples of poems of revelry, dating from this period.

5. Examples of poems of patriotism; assign some reasons in the social and political conditions of the times for their popularity.

6. Various distinctive names have been applied to this group of poets. Explain the following:—

a. The Metaphysical School.

b. The Fantastic School.

c. The Tribe of Ben.

d. Cavalier Lyrists.

References :

Johnson: Cowley, in "Lives of the Poets."

Saintsbury: Elizabethan Literature, Chap. X.

T. Arnold: English Literature, pp. 159-176.

TOPIC XI.

JOHN DRYDEN.

[Select Poems of Dryden. Ed. Christie.]

I. ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL, PART I.

1. This is not only Dryden's most important satirical poem, but probably also the most perfect and powerful specimen of this kind of writing in the language. Explain the political situation which furnished the occasion for this satire, and study it for its admirably drawn characters of the principal public men, its skill in moral portrait-painting, its famous lines, etc.

2. It has been said that "Dryden succeeds better in his portraits of enemies than of friends." Discuss that statement and give some explanation.

II. RELIGIO LAICI.

This is one of the few of Dryden's poems neither written professionally, nor dedicated to a patron, nor suggested by one. Describe the state of religious controversy in England at this time, and Dryden's attitude toward it, as revealed in this poem. As a specimen of the "art of reasoning in verse" how do you rank this poem?

III. THE HIND AND THE PANTHER.

This is the earliest regular didactic poem in the language, and a remarkable specimen of metrical dialectics. Can it properly be called an allegory? If not, why not? Explain the motive of the work, and the change in Dryden's religious opinions with which it was coincident.

IV. ALEXANDER'S FEAST.

This ode has been compared to some "grand and elaborate concerto of Beethoven." In what respects does it justify the comparison, and how do you rank it as a specimen of versification?

V. Near the close of his life, Dryden wrote of himself as "one who had done his best to improve the language and especially the poetry" of his native country. In what respects, and especially in his handling of the heroic metre, was he entitled to make this claim?

VI. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE

Johnson : Dryden, in "Lives of the Poets."

Macaulay : Essay on Dryden.

TOPIC XII.

ALEXANDER POPE.

[Essay on Man. Ed. Pattison.]

I. DIRECT STUDY.

Essay on Man. No English poem contains a greater number of lines that have passed into proverbs. Give some reasons for this, and discuss the poem from the following points of view: —

1. As philosophy. Dugald Stewart called it "the noblest specimen of poetry which our language affords," and for many years this was the universal verdict. In later times it has been called, by De Quincey, "the realization of anarchy;" by Lowell, "a droll medley of inconsistent opinions;" while Leslie Stephens says, "Pope had never studied any philosophy or theology whatever, and he accepts with perfect unconsciousness fragments of the most heterogeneous systems." What is your opinion? Do you find any central thesis to the poem? If so, what?

2. As Argument. Does the poem seem to you to be a successful achievement of its avowed purpose to "vindicate the ways of God to man"?

3. As Poetry. Point out the high qualities of expression, the evidences of generous sympathy for humanity, of righteous indignation against bigots; the qualities poetical, in distinction from philosophical or logical. Are these sufficient to entitle Pope to be counted as a great poet, or as some insist, only "an artist in verse"?

4. As a classic. It has been said of this poem "The young scholar cannot propose to himself a more instructive model to dwell upon and to analyze." For what reasons?

II. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL and BIOGRAPHICAL.

1. Give some account of the circumstances that determined Pope's choice of subject.
2. Discuss Pope's fitness to deal with this theme, taking into consideration his temperament and education.

TOPIC XIII.

ALEXANDER POPE.

[Satires and Epistles. Ed. Pattison.]

I. DIRECT STUDY: SATIRES AND EPISTLES.

In the reign of George II. satire was as fashionable as the drama in the reign of James I. Discuss Pope's merits and defects as a satirist in the following respects: —

1. Sincerity; was his indignation real or assumed?
2. Justice; compare the reports of history with his portraits of
 - a. Lord Hervey.
 - b. Addison.
 - c. Mary Wortley Montagu.
3. Bias; how far do Pope's utterances seem dictated by rules of social conduct and principles of literary taste, and how far by personal spite and party zeal?
4. Discuss Pope's distinction between satire and libel (in "Advertisement" to Imitation of Horace, 2 Sat. 1), and say which title he himself deserves in the verses following.
5. Discuss the manners of the age and the taste for personalities in literature, as shown by the character of these writings.
6. Congeniality of this class of composition to Pope's personal temperament.

II. Improvement in the literary market, as indicated by the sums received respectively by Pope for his translation of Homer, and by Milton, sixty years earlier, for "Paradise Lost."

III. Influence of Pope on his age. Contemporary judgments compared with present judgments.

IV. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

Leslie Stephen: Pope, in "English Men of Letters Series."

Lowell: Pope, in "My Study Windows."

De Quincey: Pope, in De Quincey's Works.

TOPIC XIV.

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

I. DIRECT STUDY: LONDON.

1. What evidence does the poem furnish of Johnson's personal feelings and experiences in the following respects:—

- a.* The penalties of poverty.
- b.* Antipathy to Whigs.
- c.* Dislike of foreigners.

2. Compared with the satires of Pope, what differences do you observe with respect to the personal element? Reasons for this difference in the nature and circumstances of the two writers? Which manifests the most genuine public spirit?

3. In what line of the poem do you find its central thought?

4. What evidences of the literary fashions of the times, both with respect to its sentiments and their expression in rhymed couplets?

5. This poem became at once very popular, and was the means of making Johnson generally known. Does it impress you as bearing the signs of inspiration, or rather like the utterance of one using an uncongenial form of expression?

II. DIRECT STUDY: VANITY OF HUMAN WISHES.

1. What differences both of style and of thought between this poem and "London," written ten years earlier?

2. Although both poems are professed imitations, they are both extremely characteristic of the writer. Reasons why the themes and method of Juvenal would furnish a congenial model for Johnson.

3. Discuss this poem as a solution of the mystery of life. Which of the successive pictures of the favorite "vanities" of men do you consider the most vigorous and effective? Do you regard the conclusion as adequate?

4. A very small portion of Johnson's writing was in verse. From these examples, do you think this to be regretted?

III. One of Johnson's greatest services to literature was in releasing it from the bondage of the patron. Give an account of how this was accomplished, and some of his own painful experiences on this account.

TOPIC XV.

WILLIAM COLLINS.

I. DIRECT STUDY: THE PASSIONS.

1. Discuss the conception of this poem; the lyric spirit of its several personifications.

2. Discuss the execution; the changes of imitative harmony whereby the appropriate music of each passion is both described and illustrated.

3. Does the poem seem to you to lack anything of lyric perfection. If so, what?

4. What evidences in the poem of Collins' personal tastes and feelings, in respect to —

a. Love of Greece and Grecian effects.

b. Refinement and spirituality of nature.

c. Spontaneity of expression and intense susceptibility to beauty.

II. DIRECT STUDY: ODE TO EVENING.

1. Analyze the means whereby these thirteen quatrains, *without rhyme*, yet produce the desired effect.

2. Significance of Swinburne's statement that "Corot on canvas might have signed this 'Ode to Evening'?"

III. DIRECT STUDY: HOW SLEEP THE BRAVE, ETC.

1. Can you find in literature any lines to equal the first two in this ode, as a memorial inscription for the soldier's burial-place? (See *Atlantic Monthly*, 1890).

2. Define lyric poetry according to its most essential quality. Does Collins possess it?

IV. Collins was contemporary with Pope and Johnson. Does his poetry have any kinship with theirs?

V. What quality appears in Collins to justify Hazlitt's statement that "Collins is the only one of the minor poets of whom, if he had lived, it cannot be said that he might not have done the greatest things."

VI. Give some account of the difficulties in Collins's life which suppressed, and later terminated his poetical production.

VII. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

Johnson : Collins, in "Lives of the Poets."

Swinburne : Collins, in Ward's "English Poets."

Hazlitt : English Poets.

TOPIC XVI.

THOMAS GRAY.

I. DIRECT STUDY: ELEGY IN A COUNTRY CHURCH-YARD.

1. For what qualities has this poem gained its great celebrity ?

2. Enumerate its leading thoughts, grouping its stanzas accordingly.

3. Would the Elegy gain or lose by a more lofty or philosophical treatment ?

4. What poets before Gray had used this same metre, and why is it specially adapted to convey a series of solemn reflections ?

5. Do you think Gosse claims too high a place for the Elegy in saying "it may almost be looked upon as the typical piece of English verse, our poem of poems" ?

6. Elegies and epitaphs were a favorite form of composition in Gray's time. Mention some notable ones, and read Gray's own dainty trifling with the fashion in "Ode on the Death of Mr. Walpole's Cat."

II. DIRECT STUDY: THE PROGRESS OF POESY AND THE BARD.

1. The verse-construction of these poems was a puzzle to Gray's friends because of its novelty in English literature. This verse-form is to be studied, not only because it was the first successful attempt in English to

comprehend and follow the method of Pindar, but because, in departing from what has come to be known as "Augustan versification," it prepared the way for Shelley and the modern lyrists.

2. Reasons why these odes have never become "popular"?

3. Compare the "Progress of Poesy" with similar historical sketches; for example, Collins's "Ode to Simplicity," Keats' "Sleep and Poetry."

4. Contemporary estimate of these poems. Do you see any force in the criticism which expressed itself in such parodies as Odes to Obscurity and Oblivion?

III. Gray said, "The style I have aimed at is extreme conciseness of expression, yet pure, perspicuous, and musical." Your opinion of his success? What is his chief lack as poet?

IV. Give some explanation of the very small amount of Gray's poetry, considering the high quality of his writing and his life of leisure. Is it an evidence of deficiency of inspiration in the man himself, or of deficiency of another sort in the age in which he lived?

V. Give some account of Gray's friendships with Horace Walpole, Richard West, and others.

VI. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

Gosse: Gray, in "English Men of Letters Series."

M. Arnold: Essays in Criticism. Second Series.

Lowell: Essay on Gray.

TOPIC XVII.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

I. DIRECT STUDY: THE TRAVELLER.

1. What is the leading motive of this poem?
2. Do you accept its theory that there is no relation between the government of a country and the happiness of its inhabitants?
3. Does the charm of "The Traveller" depend upon its theories? If not, on what?
4. Can you find anything in Goldsmith's own experiences that would seem to fit him for painting this picture of ideal England?
5. Johnson declared "The Traveller" to be the finest poem published since Pope. Do you agree with that judgment?
6. Give some account of the growth and development of "The Traveller;" of Johnson's share in its completion and publication.
7. In what respect is the plan of this poem entitled to be considered original?

II. DIRECT STUDY: THE DESERTED VILLAGE.

1. Whether the "Sweet Auburn" be an English village or the Irish village of Lissoy,—Goldsmith's childhood home; whether the political economy of the poem be solid or simply sentimental, are much discussed questions in connection with this poem. Does your estimate of "The Deserted Village" depend upon your answer to these questions, or upon considerations entirely apart?
2. By reason of what quality have so many couplets from this poem passed into our familiar speech?

3. Point out any errors in the poem, either as to fact or to interpretation of fact.

4. Goldsmith was a firm believer in the didactic mission of poetry. Is his own poetry more attractive for its didactic features?

III. Give some account of the state of English poetry and reasons why the time was particularly propitious for poems of Goldsmith's kind.

IV. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

Irving : Life of Goldsmith.

Black : Goldsmith, in "English Men of Letters Series "

Macaulay : Essay on Goldsmith.

Thackeray : English Humorists.

TOPIC XVIII.

ROBERT BURNS.

I. DIRECT STUDY: TAM O'SHANTER.

Thomas Carlyle says of this poem, "It is not so much a poem as a piece of sparkling rhetoric; the heart of the story still lies hard and dead." Sir Walter Scott, on the other hand, speaks of it as "the inimitable tale," and says that "no poet except Shakespeare ever possessed the power of exciting the most varied and discordant emotions with such rapid transitions." With which verdict do you agree?

II. The Cotter's Saturday Night; The Twa Dogs; Hallowe'en; A Man's a Man for a' That.

Discuss these poems, and the explanation they offer for the love in which Burns is held by the Scottish peasant,—a love exceeding that of any other people for any other poet, probably.

III. Bannockburn; Caledonia; Author's Farewell to his Native Country.

These and similar poems came from the pen of Burns at a time when the feeling of nationality in Scotland was at a very low ebb; when Englishmen despised Scotchmen, and Scotchmen seemed ashamed of themselves and of their country. Effect of poems with such themes and in this vernacular upon the sense of Scottish nationality?

IV. To a Mouse; Lines on Scaring some Water-Fowl; The Auld Farmer to his Mare; Verses on a Wounded Hare; Poor Mailie.

Discuss these poems in evidence of Burns's sympathy with the brute creation as "fellow-creatures." Had this been common in the poetry of his predecessors?

V. Mary Morison; My Nanie O; The Birks of Aber-Feldy; Of a' the Airts the Winds can Blaw; John Anderson, my Jo; To Mary in Heaven; Highland Mary; O Wert thou in the Cauld Blast?

1. The fame of Burns rests chiefly on songs such as these, and his place as first of song-writers is hardly questioned. The words were made to fit existing tunes, instead of being composed and set to music afterward. Give some account of this body of national melody, the character of the verse which was sung to it, and the service Burns rendered to Scottish song by supplanting this verse with his own.

2. Apart from their singing quality, what main characteristic makes them beloved for all time and by all peoples?

VI. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

Carlyle: Essay on Burns.

Shairp: Burns, in "English Men of Letters Series."

Hazlitt: English Poets.

TOPIC XIX.

WILLIAM COWPER.

I. DIRECT STUDY: THE TASK, BOOKS I. II. IV.

1. In this poem which, with so little apparent connection, deals with such a variety of subjects, religious, political, social, philosophical, horticultural, do you recognize any one pervading tendency or purpose throughout? If so, what? Quote to prove.

2. Judging from this poem, should you call Cowper an original writer? If so, in what respect?

3. It was "The Task" that made Cowper famous, and many of its passages have become commonplaces of conversation. If it were a new poem to-day, would it make a like impression? If not, why not?

4. Give some account of the circumstances which determined the title of the poem, "The Task," and of the first book, "The Sofa;" also explain the allusion in line 7, Book I.

5. This poem has been called "the poem of a sect." Explain what sect, and the attitude of its worshippers whereby "The Task" was regarded by them somewhat in the same light as "Paradise Lost" was regarded by the Puritans.

6. A modern critic says that Cowper's work derives a special interest from "the pathos of his life and his position in our poetical history." Explain the first part of this statement by a study of his biography, and the last part by comparing "The Task" with previous poems. Do you find in it any new "note" in respect to human nature, to sympathy with animals, to descriptions of natural scenery?

II. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

T. H. Ward: Cowper, in Ward's "English Poets"

Goldwin Smith: Cowper, in "English Men of Letters Series."

E. B. Browning: Poem on Cowper's Grave.

TOPIC XX.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

I. DIRECT STUDY: THE ANCIENT MARINER.

1. Do you consider this poem as solely a free and picturesque outcome of the poetic imagination, or do you prefer to treat it as addressed to the conscience and understanding also?

2. Discuss some of the leading theories that have been offered, as follows:—

a. "Its religion is all contained in the phrase, 'He prayeth well who loveth well, both man, and bird, and beast.'" (Stopford Brooke.)

b. "This sweet little childish moral at the end is merely a device to bring the reader back to the world of sense. . . . The underlying motive is the unity of life, . . . the mystical brotherhood between the brute creation and the human race and the higher intelligences." (Chas. F. Johnson.)

c. "The moral is the love of all creatures as a sort of religious duty." (W. H. Pater.)

d. "The soul makes its own world, and in the living spirit of love is the only life of man." (Katherine Lee Bates.)

3. It has been said that "there is nothing comparable to the effect of 'The Ancient Mariner,' unless it be the

terror induced by certain strains of music." Consider the cumulative touches which produce this effect.

4. In its ballad characteristics, compare "The Ancient Mariner" with other sea ballads, especially "Sir Patrick Spence." (See Percy's "Reliques of Ancient Poetry.") What element does Coleridge add to the simplicity of the old ballads?

5. If the *creation of a new thing* be the highest manifestation of the poetic genius, where shall we place "The Ancient Mariner"?

II. BIOGRAPHICAL.

1. Give some account of the strange compact between Wordsworth and Coleridge that led to the production of "The Ancient Mariner." (See Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, Chap. XIV.)

2. Publication of the poem; contemporaneous criticism. (See Wordsworth in second edition of "Lyrical Ballads;" quoted by Lowell in essay on Wordsworth in "Among my Books," Vol. II.)

TOPIC XXI.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

I. DIRECT STUDY: LINES COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY.

1. Quote the lines which embody the leading thoughts of the poem.

2. The banks of the Wye furnished the occasion and the theme for this poem, but what larger title might be given to it? Can you name any other poem in the language entitled to an equally high rank as a Hymn to Nature?

3. What evidences in the poem that, great as was Nature's power over the poet's mind, it nevertheless takes a second place, and is important chiefly as a stage for the actions of man?

4. By reason of what qualities does this poem attract minds of almost every shade of religious conviction, all being able to turn to it for an expression of their feelings about Nature?

5. It has been said that "the essential spirit of the 'Lines near Tintern Abbey' was, for practical purposes, as new to mankind as the essential spirit of the Sermon on the Mount." What was this new spirit?

6. Point out the single lines and passages that serve to justify Coleridge's phrase of the "*curiosa felicitas*" of Wordsworth's diction.

II. DIRECT STUDY: ODE ON THE INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY.

1. Do you consider that Wordsworth means to avow himself a believer in the old Oriental doctrine of an antenatal existence, an exponent of the doctrine of metempsychosis? If not, express your interpretation of his meaning.

2. Do you think the instinct of delight in Nature and her beauty is so common in childhood as seems to be implied by this poem?

3. Do you find any lack of connection between the first four stanzas and the remaining portion?

4. Cite passages from the poem illustrative of the purity and power of Wordsworth's inspiration.

5. Cite passages indicative of the unequal and partial nature of Wordsworth's genius.

TOPIC XXII.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

I. DIRECT STUDY: THE SONNETS.

1. Describe Wordsworth's own attitudes toward this form of poetical composition as described in the sonnet beginning, "Scorn not the Sonnet, Critic!"

2. Lowell says, "The law of the sonnet tempers monologue with mercy." Give some reasons in the nature of Wordsworth's mental constitution why the restraints imposed by the sonnet-form were particularly needful in his case.

3. The sonnets number over four hundred, yet are connected by a predominant thought or tone. Read those beginning, "The world is too much with us;" "Brook! whose society the poet seeks;" "Pelion and Ossa flourish side by side," and explain Wordsworth's attitude toward the idealization of Nature.

4. Read some of the "Sonnets dedicated to Liberty," and describe how Wordsworth's poetry and his idea of the office of poetry was affected by the French Revolution.

II. BIOGRAPHICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL.

1. Give some account of the derision with which Wordsworth's early poetry was received; Jeffrey's review of "The Excursion" in the *Edinburgh Review*.

2. Describe Wordsworth's theory of poetic diction (see Myers's "Wordsworth," Chap IX. "English Men of Letters Series.") Is Wordsworth's best poetry that which conforms most nearly to his own doctrines?

3. What effect had this manifesto — which has been called "as famous in its way as the Declaration of

Independence" — on the public mind, and what excuse did it furnish the reviewers for ridiculing the poems, with which it was bound?

4. Reception of the later poems; modern judgments; reasons why Wordsworth is by common consent counted as *fifth* of the great English poets.

III. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

Coleridge: *Biographia Literaria*, Chaps. XIV.-XXII.

M. Arnold: *Essays in Criticism*. Second Series.

Wordsworthiana. Edited by William Knight.

TOPIC XXIII.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

I. DIRECT STUDY: MARMION.

1. Although Scott disavowed any intention to write an epic poem, in what respects does *Marmion* fulfil the accepted definition of epic poetry? (See Aristotle's "Poetics;" or the summary of that definition in Arnold's "English Literature," p. 343.)

2. Discuss the six introductory epistles. Do they seem out of place by reason of their interruption of the story, or do they enhance your interest by revealing the relation of the poet to his theme?

3. The Battle of Flodden and its relation to Scottish history; what gave it peculiar fitness for poetical treatment?

4. Does the character of *Marmion* come within the range of probability?

5. Is the expedient that produces the catastrophe in harmony with the setting of the poem?

6. Does the charm of the poem depend upon the characters or the action?

7. Illustrate by citations from this poem Scott's acknowledged power in dealing with—

a. Natural scenery.

b. Chivalrous and romantic life.

c. Interesting historic personages.

d. Battle scenes.

8. Taine calls Scott "the Homer of modern citizen life." Appropriateness of that title?

9. Shairp says, "Scott came at the latest hour when it was possible for a great epic minstrel to be born, and the altered conditions of the world will not admit of another." Why?

II. BIOGRAPHICAL.

1. Consider the circumstances of Scott's early years, and their probable effect in directing his genius.

2. Give some reasons why Scott ceased to write poetry and began to write novels.

III. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

Shairp: Aspects of Poetry.

Hutton: Scott, in "English Men of Letters Series."

Shaw: English Literature, Chap. XVII.

TOPIC XXIV.

LORD BYRON.

I. DIRECT STUDY: CHILDE HAROLD, CANTO III.

1. In what do you find the chief charm of this poem; in its description of external scenes, or in its analysis

and exposition of the writer's feelings, reflections, and states of mind?

2. An interval of four years had elapsed since the publication of Cantos I. and II. Notwithstanding the author's protestations to the contrary, no one can fail to regard Canto III. as in a large measure autobiographical. Discuss the opening lines and the four closing stanzas, in connection with the events that had just taken place (1816) in his private life.

3. Discuss stanzas III.-XVI. for evidence of Byron's attitude toward the world and society.

4. Discuss stanzas XXI.-XXVIII. Scott said of these (and most generously said, since this was his own particular field of writing), "I am not sure that any verses in our language surpass in vigor and in feeling this most beautiful description." Do you think this praise excessive?

5. Discuss stanzas LXXXV.-XCV. Although not faultless, what notably fine poetic qualities mark this passage?

6. Byron's prevailing note, as in this poem, was his own misery and despair. Why did this touch such a sympathetic chord among his contemporaries?

II. HISTORICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL.

1. Give some account of the history of Byron's poetical reputation; some reasons for its lack of perpetuity, especially among his own countrymen.

2. Byron is rated much higher by foreign critics, like Mazzini, Goethe, etc., than by Englishmen generally. Reasons?

3. Thackeray said of Byron, "That man *never* wrote from his heart; he got up rapture and enthusiasm with an eye to the public." Does this assertion seem too sweeping?

III. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

John Morley : Byron, in "Miscellanies," Vol. I.

Matthew Arnold : Byron, in "Essays in Criticism."
Second Series.

Macaulay : Byron, in "Essays,"

TOPIC XXV.

JOHN KEATS.

I. DIRECT STUDY : THE EVE OF ST. AGNES.

1. Keats owed to the reading of Spenser his first impulse toward writing poetry. What traces of that influence do you discover, both in the character of the poem and its versification ?

2. The chief incident of the poem is founded on a popular superstition ; what features of the story recall "Romeo and Juliet" ? Chaucer's "Troilus and Cressida" ?

3. It has been said that "Keats had an instinct for fine words, which are in themselves pictures, and had more of the power of poetic expression than any modern English poet." Illustrate this by citations from the poem.

4. What evidences in this poem of the penetrative and sympathetic imagination to a degree which belongs only to poets of the first rank ?

5. The chief charge against Keats is his over exuberance. Is this an uncommon or even a discouraging defect in a poet as young as Keats ?

6. Can you name any narrative poem surpassing this in its power to carry the reader into the Land of Faery ?

II. DIRECT STUDY: THE SONNETS.

"On first looking into Chapman's Homer" and others.

Compare these sonnets with the best sonnets of other writers, — Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, — and discuss Lowell's statement that "taking all qualities into consideration, some of Keats's sonnets are the most perfect in our language."

III. BIOGRAPHICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL.

1. Note the hampering conditions of Keats with respect to birth, surroundings, and lack of education; his early death. Compare the amount and quality of his production with that of other poets at the age of twenty-five.

2. Keats's reception by the reviewers; history of his later reputation.

IV. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

M. Arnold: Keats, in "Essays in Criticism," Second Series.

Lowell: Keats, in "Among my Books," Vol. II.

Colvin: Keats, in "English Men of Letters Series."

TOPIC XXVI.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

I. DIRECT STUDY: ALASTOR.

1. Alastor is *not* the name of the hero of the poem, but is a word derived from the Greek, and signifying an "evil genius." It was suggested as a title by one of Shelley's friends. What evil genius is depicted in the poem?

2. Significance of the Latin motto from Saint Augustine, as expressive of deeper meanings of the poem?

3. This poem is the first as well as the most pathetic

of Shelley's self-revelations, conveyed amid great ideality of treatment. Consider its expressions in the following particulars: —

- a. Religious belief. What theory of the universe is implied by the Invocation to Earth, Ocean, and Air, as his "beloved brethren," with a common "Mother of this unfathomable World"? Compare his letter to Miss Hitchener (Jan. 2, 1812), "I believe that 'God' is another signification for 'the Universe.'" Discuss such utterances as evidence against the charges of "atheism," not yet wholly obsolete.
- b. Impressions of the supernatural. Compare the thought of stanza 2 with Wordsworth's phrase "obstinate questionings of sense and outward things." Do these "incommunicable dreams" furnish any clew to the spiritual insight possessed by Shelley and other great poets?
- c. Love. Note the qualities of the vision of Ideal Love in stanza 7, — "a voice heard in the calm of thought;" "knowledge and truth and virtue were her theme;" "the solemn mood of a pure mind," etc. Contrast this longing for *thought-companionship* with the accusations often made against Shelley's affairs of the heart.
- d. Immortality. Does the poem seem to imply disbelief in a future life? Compare Shelley's lines in "The Sensitive Plant:" —

" For love and beauty and delight,
There is no death nor change," etc.

- e. Note certain evidences of Shelley's likings and theories implied in such expressions as "bloodless food;" "one living man over the world wanders forever," etc.

II. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

Symonds : Shelley, in "English Men of Letters Series."

Stopford Brooke : Introduction to Selections from Shelley.

Rossetti : Memoir prefixed to Shelley's Poems.

TOPIC XXVII.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

I. DIRECT STUDY : AURORA LEIGH.

1. What principles of reform and what social philosophy does this poem inculcate ?

2. Do you sympathize with this philosophy, or do you think the poem exaggerates the effect of Art and of mental culture in elevating the condition of the masses ?

3. In Book I., note the passage relating to English scenery ; in Book VII., the one relating to Italy. What are Mrs. Browning's gifts as a descriptive poet ?

4. In Book II., are your sympathies with Aurora or with Romney ? Do you feel any lack in Romney, notwithstanding his noble purposes and his love for his cousin ?

5. Book III. Discuss the new characters now introduced.

6. Book IV. Discuss the character of Romney Leigh. Does his intended marriage seem to you somewhat fanatical for one who has heretofore seemed so practical, or do you sympathize with it ?

7. Books V. and VI. Would these gain by condensation ?

8. In the concluding portions of the poem do you think the story well contrived and the events happily chosen ? In which of the two heroines do you feel the greater interest ?

9. Even granting the impracticability of Romney's schemes, do not his failures seem excessive as punishment, both as to kind and amount?

10. Aurora Leigh was one of the earliest attempts at novel-writing in verse. Do you find that it sometimes ceases to be a poem in order to become a story?

11. In what respects, if any, do you think the poem may be regarded as autobiographical?

12. Ruskin called Aurora Leigh the greatest poem of the century. Do you share that opinion? Your reasons, either for assent or dissent.

II. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

Article in *Contemporary Review*, 1873.

W. T. Arnold: Mrs. Browning, in "Ward's English Poets."

TOPIC XXVIII.

ALFRED TENNYSON.

DIRECT STUDY: IDYLLS OF THE KING.

1. Read the address to the Queen (originally printed as "Epilogue,") and give your understanding of the poet's statement of his purpose. Is his aim to produce an historical poem? an allegory? a story of human life? a parable told with a purpose?

2. Read "The Coming of Arthur." Explain the allegorical figures and passages. What personification is intended by the Lady of the Lake? by the sword Excalibur? by its respective inscriptions, one in ancient, one in modern language?

3. Explain Merlin's oracular triplets beginning, "Rain, rain and sun," etc., — an expression of a modern philosophical attitude in the mouth of a sixth century bard. Is this admissible in a poem of this kind?

4. What is the task which Arthur sets for himself, and what expression do you find here of the ever-recurring problem of civilization?

5. In what lines do you find the secret of the prosperity with which King Arthur begins his reign?

6. Read "Gareth and Lynette." This is one of the most simple and straightforward of the Idylls; do you consider it simply a fairy romance, or has it a human interest also?

7. Are the different conceptions of nobility as exemplified in Gareth and in Lynette, respectively, yet extinct?

8. Read "Merlin and Vivien." This story is a decided departure from the old legends, the character of Vivien being created by Tennyson, and her influence being one of the chief causes of the corruption of the court at a later time. Does it seem to you wholly in keeping with the general tone of this fairy epic? Is it somewhat too coarse and graphic for the occasion?

9. Parallelisms between this "Vivien" idyll and one of the old Bible stories.

References:

Van Dyke: The Poetry of Tennyson.

Articles in *Contemporary Review*, 1873; *Spectator*, January, 1870.

TOPIC XXIX.

ALFRED TENNYSON.

DIRECT STUDY: IDYLLS OF THE KING.

1. Read the "Holy Grail." What idea do you consider that Tennyson intended to symbolize by the Holy Grail and the quest for it?

2. Why does Arthur, the ideal man, discourage that quest? Does his deprecation extend to the religious life in itself, or only when it is disjoined from human service?

3. How do you understand the different fates attending the various knights, both those who "followed wandering fires" and those who, like Percivale, Galahad, and Launcelot, attained unto the vision under circumstances of varying difficulty and peril?

4. Who is the real hero of this idyll? Why?

5. In what ways does Arthur's speech to the knights after their return from the quest embody the modern rather than the ancient conception of public office?

6. Read "Guinevere." Tennyson departs from the old legends in making the meeting of Launcelot and Guinevere occur *previous* to the meeting of Arthur and Guinevere. Does not this fact somewhat affect our judgment concerning the later relations of the lovers?

7. In the parting interview between the King and Queen, do you think a little less self-righteousness would be more becoming on the part of Arthur?

8. Does the character of Arthur throughout the poem lack somewhat of the qualities essential either to greatness or loveliness?

9. Which seems to you the central figure of the Idylls, Arthur or Launcelot?

10. Read "The Passing of Arthur." Has it any spiritual significance?

11. Do the picturesque and scenic qualities of the Idylls obscure their human interest?

12. In representing the Queen's transgression as responsible for the ruin of the realm and the failure of Arthur's humane life-purposes, does the consequence appear too large for the cause?

13. Discuss the rhythm, diction, and gnomic sayings scattered throughout the epic.

TOPIC XXX.

ALFRED TENNYSON.

I. DIRECT STUDY: IN MEMORIAM.

1. Read *The Invocation*. As the deepest and most personal expression of the poet's own religious feeling and of his philosophy of the universe, what do you find to be its teaching on the following points?

- a.* The efficient cause of the universe, and our reasons for trusting it.
- b.* Human systems, and their relation to the divine government of the universe.
- c.* The freedom of the human will; how secured?
- d.* The conscious immortality of the individual.
- e.* Faith. Its relation to our convictions; its authority in matters inaccessible to understanding and knowledge. The decay and revival of faith.

2. Read I.-VIII. What do these lyrics answer to such questions as these?

- a.* Which is better, a world in which love is alloyed with grief, or a world without love?
- b.* Resignation. Is the fact that "loss is common to our race" any consolation to the bereaved?
- c.* Reasons for seeking verse-expression and for consecrating it to the memory of the departed.

3. Read IX.-XXI. Compare this portion of the poem with the incidents on which it is based,—the death of Arthur Hallam, and the friendship of Tennyson and Hallam. The poet's answer to the practical minds who deplore the writing of "*In Memoriam*" as wasted energy?

4. Read XXVIII.-XXXVI. Turning from the past to the future, the old but ever-new question of the immortality of the soul arises. What is the poet's conclusion on the following points?

- a.* Ought it to require any revealed, supernatural proof to convince us of the soul's immortality?
- b.* If death ends all, would life still be worth living?
- c.* The value of the Christian revelation as a supplement to the reasoning faculties, especially to some minds?

II. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

Stedman: Victorian Poets.

Noel: *Contemporary Review*, February, 1885.

Cooke: Poets and Problems.





XI.

INTRODUCTORY TO THE STUDY OF BROWNING.



THE collected works of Robert Browning form the largest body of poetry produced by any one poet in English literature ; but, in such a matter, mere quantity is no test of value. Whether we are willing to bestow on Browning more prolonged study than in the case of any other poet, except Shakespeare, will depend very largely on our ideals of what constitutes high excellence in poetry. Many and differing views prevail : —

1. There are persons who say that the poet's chief office is *to please*. They insist upon "art for art's sake," and urge that in poetry the moral, the motive, is nothing compared with smoothness and beauty. This theory of poetry would

place musical Swinburne and Rossetti in the very front rank of poets, while it would almost entirely exclude Robert Browning, thinker and seer, but whose verse, as even his warmest admirers admit, is frequently rugged and irregular, whose diction is involved and elliptical, and whose subjects are peculiar. And yet as I make this charge of roughness in versification, many melodious lines ring in my ears, and, seem to ask for a chance to be heard here in their own defence. For pure sweetness, what can surpass this?

Such a starved bank of moss
Till, that May-morn,
Blue ran the flash across :
Violets were born !

Sky — what a scowl of cloud
Till, near and far,
Ray on ray split the shroud :
Splendid ! a star !

World — how it walled about
Life with disgrace,
Till God's own smile came out :
That was thy face !

Delicacy and grace are desirable, but to rate these higher than thought is to establish a false scale of values. If we cannot have both music and thought in poetry, by all means let us have the thought.

2. There are others who think that a *love of Nature* is the chief poetic qualification, — that the sights and sounds, the shapes and colors of the visible world, form the true themes for a poet. Tried by this test, Browning will hardly satisfy. Nature interests Browning chiefly as a background for his pictures of men and women. But is not this also true of Homer, Shakespeare, Dante, — all the world's greatest poets? Are they not as notably deficient in descriptions of scenery, for the sake of the scene merely, as Browning himself? I believe the notion that a susceptibility to natural scenery is the first requisite of a great poet is simply another popular fallacy, and that the whole history of literature does not furnish an instance of a poem of the first rank whose subject is a description of Nature.

Even Wordsworth, who at first thought would seem to furnish an instance of a great poet finding his themes in the visible world, does, in fact, deal less with elaborate physical descriptions of the scenes of Nature as they appear to the outward eye than with the feeling and thought which natural beauty awakens in the soul of the sensitive beholder. On revisiting the banks of the Wye after a five years' absence, he says : —

“ I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth, but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts, a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man, —
A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. *Therefore*, am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods
And mountains.”

This passage is aptly descriptive of the spirit of all of Wordsworth's best descriptions of Nature, so called. Nature is to him a grand, spiritual symbol, moving him to meditative rapture. The outward spectacle is, indeed, reproduced; but it is rather through the emotions enkindled in him than through the landscape-painter's art that we know the streams and woods and mountains that he loved.

3. A third conception of poetry says that its office is to deal with the *world of man*, that the great poet is he who gives us, as Emerson said Shakespeare did, “his recorded convictions on those questions which knock for answer at every

heart, — on life and death, on love, on wealth and poverty, on the prizes of life and the ways whereby we come at them, on the characters of men and the influences occult and open which affect their fortunes, and those mysterious and demoniacal powers which defy our science and which yet interweave their malice and their gift in our brightest hours.”

Truly, this is a far higher and grander work than any other which ever has been, or ever can be, proposed by poet. It is this precisely at which all the loftiest poets aim. Homer in his pagan fashion, Dante in his mediæval fashion, Shakespeare and Browning after their more modern way. Browning says, “My stress lay on the incidents in the development of a soul. Little else is worth study.”

Thus he stated his own purpose and ideals in the preface to one of his early poems (“Sordello”); and thus we find him ever since, intent on exploring the mysteries of human life and character, sympathetic with all the great movements of intellectual and spiritual life in the world at large. It is true that he has chosen few English themes, has written little about contemporary men and manners, nothing that has appealed to statesmen, like Mrs. Browning’s poems in behalf of Italy’s freedom; nor to reformers like her “Cry of the Children,” or like Hood’s “Song of the Shirt.”

Neither has he, like Tennyson, sung welcome songs to royalty or sonnets on political events. But the questions uppermost with him are the thought questions that belong to this living, moving, breathing nineteenth century,—questions that have only come to the front in our own time, and are so peculiarly the product of contemporary thought that it is not too much to prophesy that the future student will find in these poems some of the best commentary and illustration of the great movements of mind in the present day; and that by reason of this fact he will continue to hold his present place as the poet most prized by many thoughtful and earnest people.





XII.

OUTLINES OF THE STUDY OF BROWNING.

THE best edition of Browning's Complete Works is the Riverside edition, seven vols. Cooke's "Browning Guide-Book," uniform in style with the foregoing, converts this edition into an annotated Browning, and is the most valuable of any of the helps for the elucidation of the poems. Mrs. Orr's "Hand-book" and Symons's "Introduction to the Study of Browning" offer interpretations of all the poems, and may often be consulted to advantage. Corson's, Fotheringham's, and Alexander's works deal with selected poems, and are valuable within their limits. The publications of the London Browning Society, in ten volumes, contain many interesting studies, but being quite expensive, and not easily obtainable, have not been included among the references in the following course of study : —

TOPICS.

- I. Browning's Ideals of Poetry.
- II. Browning's Philosophy of Life.
- III. Art Poems.
- IV. Spiritual Aspiration.
- V. Poems of Jewish Life and Thought.
- VI. Ivàn Ivànovitch.
- VII. Tragedy in Marriage.
- VIII. Love, in respect to Constancy.
- IX. Caliban.
- X. Cleon.
- XI. Modern Religious Thought.
- XII. The Ring and the Book, Book I.
- XIII. The Ring and the Book, Books II. III. IV.
- XIV. The Ring and the Book, Book V.
- XV. The Ring and the Book, Book VI.
- XVI. The Ring and the Book, Book VII.
- XVII. The Ring and the Book, Book X.
- XVIII. The Ring and the Book, Book XI.
- XIX. The Ring and the Book, Book XII. and Summary.
- XX. Paracelsus, Act I.
- XXI. Paracelsus, Act II.
- XXII. Paracelsus, Act III.
- XXIII. Paracelsus, Act IV.
- XXIV. Paracelsus, Act V.
- XXV. Ferishtah's Fancies, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4.
- XXVI. Ferishtah's Fancies, Nos. 5, 6, 7.
- XXVII. Ferishtah's Fancies, Nos. 8, 9, 10, 11.
- XXVIII. Ferishtah's Fancies, No. 12 and Epilogue.
- XXIX. General Survey of Browning's Poetry.
- XXX. Comparative Study.

TOPIC I.

BROWNING'S IDEALS OF POETRY.

I. HOW IT STRIKES A CONTEMPORARY.

1. Underneath the Spanish dress and humorous treatment, what distinct and individual theory of the mission of poetry do you read in this poem?

2. What criticism of popular standards? Show the correspondence between the situation of the poet in this poem with respect to popular imagination and the history of poetical reputations in the case of such men as Shelley, Keats, etc.

II. AT THE MERMAID.

1. Underneath the mask of Shakespeare, what answer do you get to the following questions: —

a. Do the writings of a dramatic poet reveal the man himself?

b. Are melancholy and the Byronic tone the fittest for poetic utterance?

2. Explain title, obscure allusions, and give the true form of the quotation adapted from Ben Jonson. To what celebrated work do these lines of Jonson's serve as introduction?

III. EPILOGUE TO PACCHIAROTTO.

1. From this direct personal utterance give Browning's opinion on —

a. The possibility of combining strength and sweetness in poetry.

b. His own choice of subjects.

c. How much persons read of the poets they profess most to admire.

- d. His conception of his own task, and his determination concerning it.
2. Who is the "dearest poet" of the second line, and in what poem does the quotation of the first line occur?

IV. If possible, read Browning's Introductory Essay to the "Shelley Letters" (reprinted in "Browning Society Papers," Vol. I.), and make an analysis of the same.

TOPIC II.

BROWNING'S PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE.

I. RABBI BEN EZRA.

1. Make an analysis of this poem, indicating its great leading thoughts, and referring to the stanzas in which they are developed respectively.

2. Does the order of the stanzas follow the order of the thought? Would the poem be improved by a different arrangement, thus adding unity of effect to its other merits?

3. What do you consider the most striking feature of the philosophy of this poem? Do you agree with it?

4. Compare stanzas 26-32 with Longfellow's "Keramos" and the "Rubiayat" of Omar Khayam.

5. It has been said, "What the 'Psalm of Life' is to the people who do not think, Rabbi ben Ezra might, and should be, to those who do. . . . It is one of those poems that mould character." Discuss that statement.

6. Although the dramatic significance of the poem is not of great importance, read, if possible, some account of Rabbi ben Ezra. (See Abenezra in *Encyclopædia Britannica*; or "Browning Guide-Book," pp. 308-315.)

II. THE GRAMMARIAN'S FUNERAL.

1. What do you consider the leading motive of this poem?
2. Which most ennobles the character, — a great work pursued for inferior ends, or insignificant labors pursued with high aims?
3. Does this figure of the old grammarian seem to you heroic, or simply pedantic and quibbling?
4. The date of this poem is fixed as "shortly after the revival of learning in Europe" In what respects is it true to the life of that time, and what signification had the word "grammarian" then?

TOPIC III.

ART POEMS.

I. PICTOR IGNOTUS.

1. Express, in a sub-title, the motive of this poem.
2. Discuss the characteristics of the art temperament as portrayed here. Do the words, "till it reached home," convey a hint concerning the kind of praise most valued in general by mankind?
3. Has the time and place as indicated beneath the title any special bearing upon the interpretation of the poem?

II. ANDREA DEL SARTO.

1. Discuss the value of love as a stimulus to genius. Judging from Andrea's own account of himself, do you rank him as equal to Raphael and the rest, if under happier conditions, or was he shut out from this high company by inherent limitations?
2. Dr. Furnivall prophesies that Andrea will live as long as Hamlet, "because it is the failures of life that

interest people." Do you agree with the statement or with the reason?

3. In what lines do you find a principle applicable to all high ideals, whether in art or in life?

4. Give an historical account of Andrea del Sarto, and of the picture which furnished Browning the suggestion for this poem. (See "Browning Guide-Book," pp. 8-15.)

III. GERARD DE LAIRESSE, IN "PARLEYINGS."

1. State the difference between the modern and the ancient habit in respect to the artistic interpretation of Nature. Compare the sentiment in this poem with Mrs. Browning's "The Dead Pan;" also with Wordsworth in sonnet beginning "Brook! whose society the poet seeks," etc.

2. This poem contains perhaps the longest of any of Browning's nature-descriptions; discuss this beautiful picture of morning, noon, and night, and its spiritual significance.

TOPIC IV.

SPIRITUAL ASPIRATION.

I. SAUL.

1. Quote the lines which, in your mind, furnish the leading idea of the poem.

2. Do the characters seem to you to correspond to the historic David and Saul, or do they seem rather like modern men wrestling with modern problems? Is that of consequence to the *poem* as a work of imagination?

3. Saul has been called "a very Jacob's ladder of song." Outline the separate songs, and show the connection between them from each lower to higher step.

4. At what point of the Bible narrative does the poem open?

5. The original form of the poem, published in 1845, closed with the ninth stanza. Ten years later it appeared in its present form, with the additional stanzas. What do these additions signify in the interpretation of the poem?

6. Compare this poem with Matthew Arnold's "Empedocles on Etna," for the description of music on disordered mental conditions.

II. ABT VOGLER.

1. Explain the allusion to Solomon; also the underlying thought of the musician's comparison of his music to a palace.

2. How do you understand stanzas 4 and 5?

3. Discuss the relation of music to the other arts, as dealt with in stanzas 6 and 7.

4. By what transition does the musician pass from thoughts of his art to the religious aspiration and high philosophy of its latter portion?

5. Do you prefer to consider this as chiefly a "music poem," like Milton's "Lines on a Solemn Music," or to class it with poems of a high spiritual order, like Wordsworth's "Ode on Immortality"?

6. Paraphrase stanza 9, of which it has been said, "No other words in the English language compress into so small a compass such a body of high and inclusive thought."

TOPIC V.

POEMS OF JEWISH LIFE AND THOUGHT.

I. HOLY-CROSS DAY.

1. In what respects does this poem penetrate into the national consciousness of the Jewish race?

2. In what respects does it seem like Robert Browning wearing, for the time, the Jewish gaberdine?

3. The sudden transition from coarse realism to the sublime and steadfast Song of Death has been called "an effect worthy of Heine." Do such "effects" come within the province of poetry?

II. FILIPPO BALDINUCCI.

1. Is the Jew's contempt of the Christian's delight in the jumble of pagan and Christian art well-founded?

2. Mosques and synagogues compared with Christian churches in respect to pictorial art; the relation of art to religion, — does it foster or debase?

III. Browning's Jews compared to Shakespeare's Jew (Merchant of Venice) in respect to —

1. Public opinion in Venice and Florence respectively.
2. Morality as compared with their persecutors.
3. Kin-affection in the race.
4. Patience and courtesy.
5. Methods adopted for their conversion.

IV. As interpreters of the spiritual life of the Jewish nation, in which do you find the highest reach, Shakespeare or Browning?

V. Comparative study. Note the differences between the portraiture of the Jew in modern fiction (as in "Daniel Deronda," etc.) and earlier types.

Reference:

Philipson: The Jew in Fiction.

TOPIC VI.

IVAN IVANOVITCH.

I. Study this poem as a masterpiece in the art of story-telling. Point out the means by which Browning has raised the mother's act out of the sphere of vulgar crime; the manner in which the scene is represented with the vividness of a picture; the touches by which character is revealed.

II. CONCERNING LOUSCHA.

1. From the evidence, do you think that Louscha flung one, or all, or none of her children to the wolves?

2. Do you think she truly did her poor best to save them?

3. In such an extremity, even with a weak woman, which instinct should you expect to be strongest, motherhood or self-preservation?

4. Granting that Louscha's aim was to save her children, would she have shown a truer instinct by sacrificing herself to the wolves, thus leaving the children to the uncertainties of the sledge in its flight?

5. Note the testimony of the regard in which she is held by her lifetime neighbors.

III. CONCERNING IVAN.

1. Do you agree with the "pope" and with the village crowd in justifying Ivàn?

2. Louscha's guilt being a question of evidence, what can be said for this action without evidence? Was the pope not bound to refrain from lynch law, at least until the husband's return?

IV. Basis of the poem. Consult "Browning Guide-Book," pp. 177-180, for the story as it is related in Russia; also for explanation of Russian names and features.

TOPIC VII.

TRAGEDY IN MARRIAGE.

I. A FORGIVENESS.

1. Discuss the character of the wife in this story, as shown by the nature of her jealousy; her method of attempting to absorb her husband's entire interest, and her actions following.

2. Is jealousy, *in one form or another*, inseparable from a passionate love?

3. Is love weakened by the certainty of possession? Compare Campbell's "Freedom and Love;" Keats's "Realm of Fancy."

4. Discuss the character of the husband as shown by his quiet, utterly unemotional manner of telling the story, even in the closing passage disclosing his knowledge of the monk's identity.

5. Discuss the statement, "blood-warmth never yet betokened strong will." Which are the more venial, sins of impulse or sins of deliberation?

II. JAMES LEE'S WIFE.

1. Comment on the different divisions of the poem, noting the moods and the respective adaptations of the metre thereto, this being almost the only instance in Browning where the metre changes during the course of the poem. (The first six cantos of Section VI. were written in 1836, twenty-eight years earlier than the other portions of the poem.)

2. Discuss the "doctrine" of VII. 2. Can one continue to love after the loss of respect and approbation, without debasing one's own nature?

3. When it proves impossible to "make the low nature better by your throes," is it then a duty to repress

one's intellectual and moral self in the hope of holding on to love by dwelling on the same low plane?

4. Describe the character of James Lee's wife.

5. Do you approve or disapprove of her final action? To what motives do you ascribe it?

III. This poem was originally called "James Lee." Which title seems to you the better?

TOPIC VIII.

LOVE, IN RESPECT TO CONSTANCY.

I. BY THE FIRESIDE.

1. Give your interpretation of this poem. Do you regard it as a personal record, or as dramatic and imaginary or as partly both?

2. What do you understand by "the path" of stanzas 21 and 25? What is "our life's safe hem" (49)?

3. Does the emphasis on the "moment one and infinite," so common in Browning, seem exaggerated?

4. What lines give Browning's view of the force of love as a stimulus?

5. What part does natural scenery play in this poem, compared with Browning's poems in general?

II. TWO IN THE CAMPAGNA.

1. Give your interpretation of this poem. In what lines do you find its key-note?

2. What reason inherent in the nature of things explains this complaint against human love?

3. Explain the evanescence of the "good minute" and "the old trick," as parts of human experience in the presence of high thoughts.

III. ANY WIFE TO ANY HUSBAND.

Do you accept this as expressive of the general situation in love, as it belongs to men and women respectively?

IV. DANIEL BARTOLI, IN "PARLEYINGS."

1. Discuss this story. Do you agree that "man's best and woman's worst amount so nearly to the same thing," etc.?

2. Read the historical basis of this story as told by Mrs. Orr and quoted by Cooke in "Browning Guide-Book."

TOPIC IX

CALIBAN.

1. Make an analysis of the chain of thought as expressed here.

2. What is the chief attribute of Caliban's Deity? Quote two lines to prove.

3. Why does Caliban, speaking of himself, use the third person?

4. Why is "talk safer than in winter-time" (st. 1); and why "this *safe* summer-time" (st. 11)?

5. Explain "dwelleth in the cold of the moon."

6. Why did the "stars come otherwise"?

7. How does Caliban derive his theory of creation?

8. How does Caliban's creed differ from his mother's, and in what respect is hers the higher?

9. Caliban's theories of prayer and sacrifice; on what were they based?

10. What place has Caliban's idea of Deity (st. 6) held in the world's history; what causes have modified it?

11. Do you attribute any ulterior purpose to this poem? or do you simply count it a representation of the religious attitude of primitive man?

12. Does the text "Thou thoughtest," etc., imply Browning's condemnation of anthropomorphism?

13. Is it desirable, or even possible, for man to cease to make God in his own image? Is any religious system free from anthropomorphism?

14. Except the name of Caliban, do you think Browning borrows anything from "The Tempest"?

15. The poem has been criticised because Caliban describes his own thoughts as a savage mind could not do. Is this a fair literary criticism for dramatic poetry or fiction?

16. Do you consider this a dramatic poem, or a satire, or both?

TOPIC X.

CLEON.

1. Give a sub-title to this poem which shall be expressive of the subject-matter, and say from what lines you derive it.

2. Make an analysis of the poem showing the progress of its thought.

3. What advance in the God-idea from Caliban to Cleon? What one word expresses Cleon's idea, as *Power* expressed Caliban's?

4. Explain "the daily building of thy tower," in stanza 3. Does this stanza seem to you to prefigure the subject-matter of Cleon's letter?

5. "Most progress is most failure" (st. 7), a favorite thought with Browning. Quote similar expressions from the Christian Abt Vogler and the Jew Rabbi

ben Ezra, and explain, in contrast with these, the "profound discouragement" of the Greek.

6. What tribute does the poem offer to the place of poetry in life? What to the mission of pain?

7. Comparative study. In connection with "Cleon," read "Karshish" and the Prologue to "Pacchiarotto," and say what answers they seem to yield to the following questions:—

- a.* According to Browning, is absolute knowledge of the future state of man desirable?
- b.* Would such knowledge help a man to perform better man's duties in man's life here?
- c.* What evidence in the first two poems concerning the effect of Christ's teaching on the intellect and culture of his time?
- d.* Compare the "Karshish" epistle with Tennyson's allusion to the Lazarus story. (In *Memoriam*, XXXI. and XXXII.)
- e.* Do you regard the Prologue to "Pacchiarotto" as having any place in this group? If not, give your own interpretation of the poem.

TOPIC XI.

POEMS RELATING TO MODERN RELIGIOUS THOUGHT.

I. A DEATH IN THE DESERT.

1. Although the dramatic framework of this poem is laid in a remote age, it is yet plainly Browning's contribution to the Strauss and Renan arguments against the supernatural origin of Christianity, then (1864) recently published. Discuss the poem in its several important divisions, as follows:—

- a.* John's prophetic vision of self-consciousness (st. 15-18).

b. The argument of fancied objectors (st. 18).

c. John's answer (st. 19-24).

d. Second class of future objectors (st. 24).

e. John's further answer (st. 25-27).

2. What is the central thought of the poem? Summed up in what lines? Any secondary thought of almost equal importance?

3. Caliban says, for God, POWER; Cleon says JUSTICE; John says —?

4. Give the historical setting of the poem, and explain the allusions in such cases as "the decree was out;" "Ebion and Cerinthus."

5. Do you consider it a serious objection to the poem that the dying Saint John should be made to discuss these attitudes of modern thinkers?

II. EPILOGUE TO DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

1. Discuss these three poems, and state what answers you find to the following doctrines:—

a. That revelation was limited to a given place and time, and that it will never be repeated.

b. That with a decline of belief in the supernatural all belief in God must suffer.

c. That God is incarnate in faith and love now as fully as in any age of the past.

2. Which do you consider to express Browning's own position? Compare with poem "Fears and Scruples."

TOPIC XII.

THE RING AND THE BOOK. BOOK I.

1. This Book I. is really the poet's *analysis* of the whole work, and its history, beginning with its earliest germ in his own mind. Reduce this poetical analysis to

plain, brief prose, expressing each part in one sentence, after the manner of heads of a discourse.

2. Make Table of Contents of the "square, old, yellow book," as it fell into Browning's hands.

3. Make Table of Contents of "The Ring and the Book" as it is to follow, according to the author's own outline.

4. What insight do you get into the workings of the poetic imagination from Browning's account of what took place when "the book was shut and done with," as contained in lines 457-697.

5. Browning's idea of the place of fiction in life. Quote to prove. Your own idea.

6. Compare ll. 825-942 with 1366-1378; also with Prelude to "Dramatic Idylls," Second Series, as evidence of Browning's opinion of Mrs. Grundy's judgments.

7. Explain line 1390, its allusion to an ancient custom, and its connecting office here. Compare with "Merchant of Venice," V. I, 148.

8. Lines 1403 to the close contain some of the most obscure of all Browning's constructions. Express in your clearest English prose.

9. For details helpful to an understanding of the poem, see "Browning Guide-Book," p. 326; or Mrs. Orr's "Handbook," p. 74.

TOPIC XIII.

THE RING AND THE BOOK. BOOKS II. III. IV.

These three books are recommended for consideration at a single lesson, the class being divided into three sections, each member undertaking to read *one* of the books with special thoroughness, and with reference to making a half-hour's report at next meeting on some one of the books. This report should embrace, —

1. A description of the character of the speaker as gathered from his view of the facts, since these "look to the eye as the eye likes the look."

2. The speaker's story told briefly, calling attention to the new elements introduced.

3. Citation of the notable lines, and comparison of them with similar lines, either in Browning or elsewhere.

4. Criticisms either of matter or style. Your own attitude toward the question, and toward the person speaking.

5. Explanations of allusions, classical, historical, or obscure.

TOPIC XIV.

THE RING AND THE BOOK. BOOK V.

1. In what respects is this monologue probably influenced by the character of the judges to whom it is addressed?

2. It has been said of this book, that "no keener, subtler piece of special pleading has ever been written, — in poetry certainly, possibly in lawyer's prose." Note the passages wherein Guido, —

a. Slurs over inconvenient facts.

b. Distorts facts for the sake of self-justification.

c. Acknowledges facts, but contrives to shift the blame.

3. Character-study of Count Guido, which shall include your own opinion on points as follows:—

a. Was his deference for religion and the law real or feigned?

b. His paternal sentiments genuine or the reverse?

c. His eloquence due to natural feeling, or carefully calculated for effect?

TOPIC XV.

THE RING AND THE BOOK. BOOK VI.

1. This is perhaps the most *poetical* of all the monologues in the volume. It has been said that "such fire, such pathos, such splendor of human speech, has never been heard or seen since Shakespeare and Webster." Does this seem to you an over-estimate?

2. Describe the conflicting emotions of the speaker, and quote passages showing the art with which the rhythm is employed to correspond with feeling.

3. Character study of Caponsacchi, including a consideration of the historical conditions and their influence.

4. What name do you give to Caponsacchi's feeling for Pompilia,—"this new thing that had been struck into me by the look o' the lady."

5. Caponsacchi defied all the conventionalities of life; does the heroic light in which he is made to appear show a lack of moral sense in Browning, or do you share his judgment of the possibility of a morality higher than accepted standards?

6. Quote passages relating to the following subjects.—

a. The use of pain in the world.

b. The meaning of death.

c. Man's strength,—has it any "drawbacks"?

d. The need of experience for those who would serve others.

7. How do you account for the great nobility of which Caponsacchi shows himself capable, considering the vanity and frivolity of his previous life?

8. Caponsacchi's action was noble and disinterested. Was it also heroic in the highest dramatic sense?

TOPIC XVI.

THE RING AND THE BOOK. BOOK VII.

1. Make a character-study of Pompilia, and account for our interest in a heroine so ignorant that she can neither read nor write. Compare book-knowledge and life-knowledge as factors in development.

2. Compare Pompilia with Mildred Tresham (in "A Blot in the 'Scutcheon"). What similarities in their conditions, and whence the differences in their ways of meeting their respective ordeals?

3. Aside from the general fact recognized by Pompilia in ll. 345-355, explain her gentleness of judgment toward all, even Guido. What overmastering emotion filled her whole being?

4. Does Browning's ability to depict this emotion add anything to your estimate of his powers?

5. What do you call Pompilia's feeling for Caponsacchi? How could a single look across a crowded theatre reveal so much?

6. Discuss Pompilia's opinions on the following points. —

a. A conventional marriage and its rights.

b. The continuity of earthly feeling and earthly work after death.

c. The evil of falsehood even for the sake of good.

7. Given the facts of Pompilia's birth, her ignorance, her extreme youth, is her development into the "perfect soul" consistent?

8. What heroic traits do you discover in Pompilia, notwithstanding her gentleness and long-suffering?

9. What evidences of high spiritual insight, notwithstanding her untrained intellect?

10. Browning's indirect descriptions of the personality of his characters. Was Pompilia beautiful?

TOPIC XVII.

THE RING AND THE BOOK. BOOK X.

(Books VIII. and IX. are purposely omitted from special study, but should be read in this connection.)

1. Analyze the Pope's monologue, with reference to the successive stages of his mental processes rather than with respect to the Franceschini story.

2. In this book we are shown the spiritual significance of the poem. Do you think it also stands for Browning's philosophy of life? If so, your evidence?

3. Express in brief prose the thought of ll. 271-275, and compare with other Browning lines expressing a similar thought.

4. Browning's theory of the inadequacy of words to express truth. Quote to prove.

5. What effect has a man's belief on a man's character? Quote from the Pope's survey of Guido.

6. What line recalls the old Latin proverb, "I know the better, I follow the worse"? Applied to Guido, how does it affect his responsibility in the Pope's mind?

7. What do you consider the central thought of this monologue?

8. What other Browning poems contain similar teaching to that of the passages relating to Caponsacchi (ll. 1094-1211)?

9. Give the Pope's argument in proof of the love of God. How does it connect itself with such poems as "Caliban," "Cleon," "A Death in the Desert"?

10. Quote the passages dealing with faith in an immortal life.

11. Do you consider gratitude a remarkably rare virtue (see l. 1121)?

12. Where, in the Pope's purgatory, would he place Avarice? Compare with Dante.

13. Compare the thunder-storm (ll. 2118-2125) with the storm in "Pippa Passes;" also with the one in "Caliban." Which is finest?

TOPIC XVIII.

THE RING AND THE BOOK. BOOK XI.

1. Contrast this monologue with the preceding one from the same speaker (Book V.), and explain reasons for the difference, by reference to —

a. The changed situation.

b. The persons before whom spoken.

c. Impelling motives in the nature of the man.

2. Was love of *posing* especially prominent in Guido, or is this a very common trait in human beings generally, as well as in condemned criminals?

3. Discuss Guido's views and fallacies, if any, concerning, —

a. Definition of law, and relation borne to it by religion.

b. Faith. The inconsistency of Christians.

c. The grievance dwelling in *accumulation* of little injuries.

4. Interpret the two closing lines. Dramatically, how do you rank them, and what revelation do they furnish of the real mind of the speaker?

TOPIC XIX.

THE RING AND THE BOOK. BOOK XII. AND SUMMARY.

1. What is the chief "lesson" of "The Ring and the Book"? Quote to prove.

2. Does this lesson stand in any vital relation to the intellectual movement of our century?

3. Is it helped or marred by so many repetitions of the same story?

4. Browning's idea of the mission of art, and of its method and power? Quote to prove.

5. Browning said to Helen Faucit, "Could I have had you for Pompilia, I should have written 'The Ring and the Book' as a drama." Do you wish he had?

6. The great fault charged against the work is that all its characters talk "Browningese." Do you agree with this criticism?

7. Is the subject too unlovely and too morally lacking for a poem, or does its conception and treatment justify Browning's choice?

8. Does the early disclosure of the whole plot and plan mar its artistic merit?

9. Notwithstanding its verbal perversities, does the work convey that impression of unity which is needful to an artistic whole?

10. Explain the allusion of the closing lines, "the poet praised," and connect the thought here with the "ring" simile at the close of Book I.

11. This is the longest poetical work of our century. Is it also the greatest?

WITH THE CRITICS.

Richard Holt Hutton: *Literary Essays*, pp. 226-236.

Arthur Symons: *Introduction to the Study of Browning*, pp. 131-149.

Robert Buchanan: *Master Spirits*, pp. 89-109.

John Morley: *Studies in Literature*.

TOPIC XX.

PARACELSUS, ACT I.

1. Read the note at the end of the poem, also articles on "Paracelsus" and "Alchemy" in Encyclopædia Britannica; or Erdmann's "History of Philosophy," for the historical setting.

2. Do you accept or doubt Paracelsus' statement about himself, that he "spurns all empty praise and love's award"? Quote to prove.

3. Discuss the quality of Paracelsus' ambition as shown in the passage beginning, "I seemed to long at once to trample on yet serve mankind." Is the unwillingness *to be served* mark of a noble or an inferior character?

4. This opening act gives poetical exposition of a certain philosophical school, which of late years has come into a new prominence. Name that philosophy, and give its principles a prose expression as you gather them from the various passages uttered by Paracelsus.

5. Explain the allusion to the "mad attempt to build a world apart from His."

6. General Gordon's favorite passage in all Browning occurs in this act. Find it, on internal evidence.

7. What rare evidence of friendship is given by Festus in this act?

8. Describe the character of Festus.

9. Describe Michal. What evidence of "woman's intuition" does she exhibit?

10. Discuss the strictly *poetical* qualities of this act. Quote the lines of marked beauty or strength.

TOPIC XXI.

PARACELSUS, ACT II.

1. Consider the opening monologue of Paracelsus. What are his chief emotions in the survey of his past life?

2. What new purpose and wish is born in him as a result of this self-examination?

3. Compare this monologue with Shelley's "Alastor." Any parallelisms?

4. Compare the mood of Paracelsus with that of Faust in the first scene of Goethe's drama. What common impulse moves them at first?

5. What special feature in the contrast of Paracelsus with Aprile which is lacking in the contrast made by Goethe between Faust and either Mephistopheles on the one hand or Margaret on the other?

6. Your interpretation of the character of Aprile? Discuss his views on the following points:—

a. Music, in relation to other arts.

b. Human life, as material for poetry.

c. The importance of seizing passing opportunity.

7. The epochal nature of certain hours and moments, as recognized by the writer preceding Paracelsus in the conjuror's book, is a favorite subject with Browning. Compare with Caponsacchi in "The Ring and the Book," also with the thought in "By the Fireside," etc.

8. Motive for the introduction of Aprile? Compare with the motive in "Saul."

TOPIC XXII.

PARACELSUS, ACT III.

1. How do you explain the curious mixture of self-scorn and self-belief developed in this act?
2. What do you think of the logic by which he attempts to justify his assumption of magical powers?
3. Discuss the following ethical questions, quoting from the poem passages bearing upon them:—
 - a.* Fitness of him who perfects any work to judge of his own labor.
 - b.* Whether love is blind.
 - c.* Limitations attendant upon study in certain lines alone. Compare with Darwin's confession that he "had become a machine for generalizing facts."
 - d.* Nature of temptation, and man's liability to it.
 - e.* Mission of great men in the world:—to "procure a wider range of thought."
4. Discuss Paracelsus' theory of life and of the universe as revealed in such passages as where he discusses "the will of God" and man's ignorance of it, "God's intimations rather fail in clearness than in energy," etc.
5. Historical setting of this scene as suggested by the allusions to Luther, Münzer and others.
6. Hutton criticises this poem because "it wants the local color peculiar to the life of the Middle Ages." Does this seem to you a fair criticism for a work of this character?
7. Explain the sources of Paracelsus' dissatisfaction with his outward and supposed success. Is this true to human nature? Are happiness and success likely to be companions?

TOPIC XXIII.

PARACELSUS, ACT IV.

1. Discuss the "plan" of Paracelsus as laid down in the passage beginning "I will accept all helps." Its fallacies, as a philosophy of life?
2. Your interpretation of "mind is nothing but disease, and natural health is ignorance."
3. Explain "Paracelsus aspires," at the beginning of this act. Do not the two men seem to have changed places with respect to aspiration?
4. Friendship as a factor in life, as illustrated in this scene.
5. Discuss the value of "old rules, made long e'er we were born," — the *established* things.
6. As poetry, what rank do you give to Paracelsus' two songs?
7. Do you discover any evidence of Paracelsus' having been in love with Michal? In any case does it affect the meaning of the poem?
8. Describe the succession of Paracelsus' emotions as shown by his account of affairs to Festus.
9. Do you discover any signs of Browning's own interest in the form of thought represented by Paracelsus?

TOPIC XXIV.

PARACELSUS, ACT V.

1. What is the *morale* of this poem? Taking into consideration Browning's age (twenty-three) at the date of writing, is it a remarkable treatment of the subject?
2. What now almost universally accepted scientific theory receives poetical exposition in the closing so-

liloquy? Compare the date of its promulgation by the scientists with the date of the writing of this poem.

3. Quote any passages which recall similar thoughts in Wordsworth's "Ode on Immortality."

4. In his humble, dying mood, Paracelsus accepts the "contempt" of men which has, in truth, been accorded him until recently. Reasons for this depreciation?

5. The fulfilment of Paracelsus' prophecy of a coming time when "they will know me," has doubtless been much assisted by this poem. Which judgment is probably the truer?

6. Discuss the thought in "I would have sinned had I been strong enough." Do we sometimes sin from strength as well as from weakness?

7. Compare "Paracelsus" with Mrs. Browning's "The Poet's Vow."

8. "Paracelsus" was written in 1835; "The Ring and the Book" in 1868. Compare the two, both in respect to art and to amount in thought.

COLLATERAL READINGS.

Paracelsus and The Data of Ethics, by Helen A. Clarke, in *Poet Lore*, 1: 117.

Outline-study of Browning's Paracelsus, by Mrs. Fanny Holy.

TOPIC XXV.

FERISHTAH'S FANCIES, NOS. 1, 2, 3, 4.

1. Discuss the tendency of such a "fancy-freak" as the Prologue, as an introduction to poems dealing with high themes

2. Give a sub-title to "The Eagle," expressive of its moral purpose. Its practical application in the daily life; alms-giving compared with "soul-helps."

3. Describe the three types of love-life presented in the lyric following. For which does Browning's own experience serve as illustration? Discuss the effect on love of a united pursuit of high aims.

4. Discuss the Hebrew text in "The Melon-Seller," — "Shall we receive good at the hands of God, and shall we not receive evil?" Is there any such thing as an "unmixed evil"?

5. Discuss the principle asserted in the lyric as applied to human love.

6. In what poems of your previous study do you find the same thought as in "Shah Abbas"?

7. Express in one sentence the thought of the lyric following.

8. "The Family" Discuss the question of prayer as a "means of grace." Is the world any less prayerful than formerly?

TOPIC XXVI.

FERISHTAH'S FANCIES, NOS. 5, 6, 7.

1. "The Sun." Give the theological argument, stripped of the story, and express the subject of the fable as a sub-title.

2. Is it possible for a man to conceive of a god without anthropomorphism? Compare Fiske's "Idea of God."

3. In what other Browning poems have you found this same plea for toleration?

4. What historical phase of Persian religion is described in the third paragraph?

5. Interpret the symbolism of the lyric following.

6. "Mihrab-Shah." Does this offer any adequate solution of the old problem, or answer the old question as to why a particularly unpleasant process should be ne-

cessary to evoke good? Compare with John Stuart Mill's reason for the existence of pain and evil in the world.

7. Explain the allusion to "Firdusi's tale" What place did it occupy in Persian literature, and why should its truth be questioned?

8. Give a sub-title to the lyric, expressive of its motive.

9. "A Camel Driver" What is the general purport of this fable? Do you accept its doctrine?

10. As a life-experience, does the lyric appeal to you as likely to be true, and of frequent occurrence?

TOPIC XXVII.

FERISHTAH'S FANCIES, NOS. 8, 9, 10, 11.

1. Do you regard the "Two Camels" as an argument for Egoism or for Altruism, or for both?

2. Emerson says, "Only so much do I know as I have lived." Would Browning assent? Do you?

3. Compare the lyric (8) with the last stanza of "The Last Ride Together," and state Browning's idea of heaven.

4. "The Cherries." Does this fable recall any similar thought in "The Ring and the Book"? What relation does the lyric bear to the fable, if any?

5. "Plot-Culture." What is the theological purport here? Or is it chiefly a contribution to the "philosophy of privacy"?

6. Compare the lyric (10) with a passage relating to "flesh" and "soul" in "Rabbi ben Ezra," and deduce Browning's general view of these matters.

7. "A Pillar at Sebzevah." Do you accept the teach-

ings here in regard to the respective values of "knowledge" and "love"?

8. Is the doctrine of "actions speak louder than words" a safe one to follow in life, especially in the love-life?

9. Does this group of fables seem to you to teach that the great object of life is to attain moral growth and strength even though the means be immoral? Do you accept that as a safe principle?

TOPIC XXVIII.

FERISHTAH'S FANCIES, NO. 12 AND EPILOGUE.

1. Analyze this "fancy," giving to it a sub-title, and stating the successive ethical problems

2. Discuss the doctrine that it is "myself that makes the good, the bad, of life's environment."

3. Compare the thought beginning, "Will of man create?" with a similar thought in Book I. of "The Ring and the Book."

4. Discuss the question of the seeming inconsistencies of life, and the manner in which they should be met.

5. Discuss the question of *authority* in a search for truth.

6. Discuss the sentiment of the lyric (12).

7. Interpret the Epilogue. How do you understand the opening words, "Oh, Love — no, Love!" in this connection? Does it seem to you to sum up the thought of the book in any special manner, or rather to be only another evidence of his faithfulness to his resolve to "never conclude his song" without the recognition of his "lyric Love."

8. This volume has been called "Browning's West-Easterly Divan." Explain the significance of this comparison with Goethe's work.

9. Why do you suppose Browning chose "Persian garments" (see motto at beginning) for this book of modern thought?

10. What thought recurs so frequently that we may perhaps call it the key-note of the book?

11. Consult Cooke's "Browning Guide-Book" for an account of the sources from which Browning drew his material for "Ferishtah's Fancies."

TOPIC XXIX.

GENERAL SURVEY OF BROWNING'S POETRY.

1. Criticise or defend Browning's fondness for dialectics. Are dialectics and poetry entirely compatible?

2. Do you count it a merit or a defect in a poet, when differing minds can gather differing meanings from the same poem? Illustrations from the poets who are, and from those who are not thus susceptible of interpretation.

3. Matthew Arnold says, "More and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console and sustain us." Discuss this statement. Are there any present signs indicative of the nature of the "poetry of the future"?

4. Do you consider Browning's genius chiefly lyrical or analytic or dramatic or philosophic?

5. What class of subjects do you regard as furnishing his best inspiration, — his reflections on religious and philosophical themes, or his sympathy with men and with life as a scope for their powers?

6. In a brief critical paper, discuss some different phases of Browning's genius, based on the three masterpieces of the three different periods of his life,—

"Paracelsus," written in youth, "The Ring and the Book," in middle life, "Ferishtah's Fancies," in old age.

7. Biographical. Consider some of the leading events in Browning's life, and show what effect these had on his poetry.

- a. Early parental sympathy and confidence.
- b. Reading of Shelley's poems.
- c. "Paracelsus" criticised for verbosity; effect on Browning's style as seen in "Sordello" and writings of that period.
- d. Marriage to Elizabeth Barrett.
- e. Life in London.

References:

Mrs. Orr: Life and Letters of Robert Browning.

Gosse: Browning Personalia.

Cooke: Poets and Problems, Part IV.

TOPIC XXX.

I. COMPARATIVE STUDY:

Browning's "Popularity."

Tennyson's "The Flower."

George Eliot's "Legend of Jubal."

1. What central thought is common to these poems?
2. Reasons why poets of the original and creative order are met by indifference or contempt from contemporaries? (Compare Shelley's "Defence of Poetry.")
3. From your foregoing Browning study do you expect Browning to be among those who will "hold the future fast," and, if so, by what special and distinctive claims?
4. It has been said that "Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Keats, and Coleridge made such a protest against

authority in poetry as had been made in the sixteenth century against authority in religion." What have they and other modern poets offered in its place?

5. It has been said that "Mr. Browning's poems have become famous as much for the curiosity they excite as for the enjoyment they bestow." Do you agree?

6. Nearly all of the poets,—for example, Wordsworth, Shelley, etc.,—furnish numerous examples of "juvenile poems," which commonly show distinct signs of youth. Do you find anything corresponding to these in the history of Browning's poetical production?

7. Do you regard Browning as purposely or unnecessarily obscure; or is some obscurity inseparable from the strength of his thought, vividness of his imagination, and novelty of his conceptions?

8. In the history of English literature, do you think our present age will hold any notable place? If so, by what claims?

II. WITH THE CRITICS.

Nettleship: *Essays and Thoughts of Browning.*

Berdoe: *Browning's Message to his Time.*


Burt: *Browning's Women.*





XIII.

INTRODUCTORY TO THE STUDY OF THE ENGLISH ESSAY.

HE essay is the latest born of all forms of literary expression; and, partly owing to the prevalence of periodical literature, it has also come to be the most popular of all forms. An essay being an "attempt," an "endeavor," implies a somewhat limited scope, and therefore is peculiarly congenial to an age of specialism like our own. Formerly, it was not too much for a man to expect to master the whole field of learning and become a great *scholar*; now, all that even the most industrious student can hope to achieve in a lifetime is the command of some special department, and he is content if he can add somewhat to the already enormous stock of particular knowledge. An independent thinker who wishes

to offer a new theory or present a new observation, whether in art, in science, in literature, generally seeks his first audience through the means of a monograph, a report, or paper; the big octavos are, in general, only expansions of the previously published essay or magazine article. Such has been the history of most of our great books of recent times, as for example, Darwin's "Origin of Species;" and Herbert Spencer's volumes of "The Synthetic Philosophy."

Thus the essay, by reason of its wide diversity of topics, exhibits a great diversity of type; in our present study it will be necessary to exclude such as deal with technical, political, or scientific themes, and restrict ourselves mainly to such as deal with questions of life or manners, and to essays in literary criticism. A few topics of historical and bibliographical matter are introduced as a help to the understanding of the special conditions and occasions that are brought under review by the critics.

We are accustomed to hearing our present literary period slightly rated; we are told that it is *merely* a time of criticism, and therefore not at all to be compared with some other times that have shown greater creative activity. Undoubtedly, invention is a higher exercise of mind than interpretation; yet criticism has a high value for the world's good, if we take a fair, wide, noble

view of the critical art. Its present prominence in letters is sure to increase rather than diminish. Owing to the vast multiplication of books, even the most industrious reader must ask help in selection. More and more as new subjects appear and old subjects enlarge into new departments will specialty-critics be needful. We shall find it interesting to inquire into the history and evolution of a kind of writing which is coming to fill so large a place in letters ; to examine some of its specimens at various periods ; and to determine what are the chief qualifications demanded of the literary critic of the first rank to-day.

The critic as a guardian of taste, as a restrainer of mannerisms, as an authority on style, language, and reputable usage, as an expounder of great works, as a guide to the reader, holds a place which no one questions, and does a work which deserves gratitude. In what forms of riot and ruin might not the wilful and exuberant genius of Lord Byron have lost itself but for the fierce check of Brougham's famous critique of the "Hours of Idleness" ? On the other hand, how many beautiful and wise creations have addressed themselves to a public blind and deaf until its eyes were opened and its ears unstopped by the hand of some skilful and discerning critic, — as when John Stuart Mill interposed, and saved Carlyle's "French Revolution" from impending

failure. It is no mean power and service thus to reveal to others the recondite or mysterious beauties of a great work of art.

As a guide in any unknown field also, what an inestimable friend is the competent critic! To the student about to undertake the study of the Greek civilization, for example, what a priceless advantage to find at the outset that one so well fitted to judge as Emerson has pointed out, from his own vast reading of the old Greek literature, the *indispensable* books, narrowing the number to five! That these may serve their best purpose and appear in their just relations to their times, he smooths the way still further by enumerating a list of historical works for collateral reading. So has he done with other times and people. Emerson's creative and original work has been great and even epoch-making; yet perhaps his advisory and critical chapter on "Books" has done, in its way, quite as much service as any of his writings, since it has been read and acted upon with profit by many to whom his philosophy would be incomprehensible or repugnant.

But these points, as I have said, are both obvious and secondary. The important truth is, that in dealing with criticism as interpreter and guide, useful as we find its service to be in these ways, we are still looking only at its simplest and humblest offices. For criticism feels as well as

thinks and knows : it stands for life-knowledge, heart-knowledge, world-knowledge, as well as book-knowledge. "The finest poetry was first experience," says Emerson. And so was the finest criticism first experience. The man who has *lived* most, who has felt the most in his own fibres, is always the man who is both most just and most tender to his fellows ; and the justice and tenderness which mark the truly great critic have been purchased at the same price. It is thus that he has won the delicate sensibility which fits him to see things as wholes and not as parts, so that he dwells not upon this little surface-point or that, but is able to set forth the subject in its inner meaning, to enter into the mystery of its being, to see what causes near and remote have shaped it, what is its relative place in the world, and what the future is likely to have in store for it. He groups and generalizes things which were before isolated and unrelated. Men and ages pass before him in masses, so to speak ; and he tells us what have been the great movements of the race, what are the laws of human progress. Thus, the great critic is always somewhat of a seer, because he is in harmony with "the divine idea of the world, which lies at the bottom of appearance."

To utter this idea to the world, not in the vague and hidden speech of the early oracles, but in

such clear and plain words that every man may understand, is the high calling of criticism. It is when we consider it in this light, and when we see how often among living writers it has done and still continues to do just this work, that the line between criticism and creation seems almost to disappear. Then it is that we are not jealous of any other time or people whatsoever. For, though we may have written no Bibles nor songs to stand with theirs, we know their Bibles and songs as they never knew them. Our sight is all-embracing, while theirs was but partial; and the words Life, Creation, God, are transfigured into a new meaning by the light of our new and larger comprehension, our ability to solve both the past and present by the universal.





XIV.

OUTLINES OF THE STUDY OF THE ENGLISH ESSAY.



THE absence of any single volume of selections adapted to this course, and fitted to represent the rise and development of literary criticism as expressed in the essay, is to be regretted ; but this deficiency has been met, whenever possible, by selecting as representative of each writer such of his writings as may have been issued in an inexpensive or easily accessible form. In such cases the edition is indicated in the small type references following the topic.

In respect to comment and analysis a similar lack prevails. Nearly all the manuals of English literature bestow far more attention on the poets than on the prose writers. The rising importance of the essay seems scarcely to be suspected ; the succession of critical literature

concerning poetry, from the times of Elizabeth until the present, is matched by no similar attention to English prose.

The following books may be named as probably the most useful in their several ways: for the direct study, Garnett's "English Prose from Elizabeth to Victoria;" for analysis of style and expression, Minto's "Manual of English Prose Literature;" for the historical and bibliographical surveys, Arnold's "Manual of English Literature;" for critical and scholarly comment, Saintsbury's "Elizabethan Literature" and Gosse's "Literature of the Eighteenth Century."



TOPICS.

- I. Sir Philip Sidney.
- II. Sir Philip Sidney.
- III. Francis Bacon.
- IV. Francis Bacon.
- V. Francis Bacon.
- VI. Francis Bacon.
- VII. Forerunners of the Modern Newspaper.
- VIII. Bibliographical Survey of English Literature from
1500 to 1625.
- IX. Social History of the Elizabethan Age.
- X. John Milton.
- XI. John Dryden.
- XII. John Dryden
- XIII. Historical Survey of England during the Seventeenth
Century.
- XIV. Richard Steele, and the Rise of the Periodical
Miscellany
- XV. Joseph Addison and the *Spectator*.
- XVI. Samuel Johnson
- XVII. Oliver Goldsmith.
- XVIII. Literary Survey of the Eighteenth Century.
- XIX. The Rise of Book-Reviewing.
- XX. Samuel Taylor Coleridge.
- XXI. Samuel Taylor Coleridge.
- XXII. William Hazlitt.
- XXIII. Thomas De Quincey.
- XXIV. Thomas Macaulay.
- XXV. Thomas Carlyle.
- XXVI. Thomas Carlyle.
- XXVII. Thomas Carlyle.
- XXVIII. Matthew Arnold.
- XXIX. Matthew Arnold.
- XXX. Essentials of Literary Criticism.

TOPIC I.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

[Defense of Poesy. Ed. A. S. Cook.]

I. DIRECT STUDY: DEFENSE OF POESY.

1. Make an analysis of this essay: what important aid to this undertaking is furnished by Sidney himself through his method of treatment?

2. Do the facts adduced concerning the prevalence of poetry among primitive peoples serve to prove that learning and civilization are unfavorable to the culture of the poetic faculty?

3. Discuss Sidney's definition of poetry. Offer a better one, if possible, either original or quoted.

4. Do you agree with Sidney in his judgment concerning the relative values of philosophy, history, and poetry?

5. Is there any other branch of literature that might fitly be included in this comparison of values? If so, what?

6. Sidney and other early writers classify poetry according to the mould into which it is cast, as heroic, lyric, dramatic, etc.,—a classification seldom mentioned by later writers. Reasons?

7. Do you sympathize with Sidney's enthusiasm for ballad poetry?

8. Discuss Sidney's canons of dramatic composition; also his picture of the state of the English drama and English poetry. The great writers immediately following Sidney made an entire departure from these canons; what effect was produced on the development of these two branches of literature?

9. With respect to the usefulness and supremacy of poetry, has Sidney's argument been impaired by the lapse of three centuries?

II. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL.

1. Date of composition and the occasion which called it forth.
2. Date of publication; differences between the two editions as to title, etc.

TOPIC II.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

COMPARATIVE STUDY.

Compare Sidney's theory of poetry with —

I. HIS PREDECESSORS.

1. Aristotle's theory of poetry; what additional elements does Sidney contribute to the premises of Aristotle?
2. Dante's defence of his mother-tongue. Compare with Sidney's.
3. Scaliger's three-fold division of poetry. Compare with Sidney.

Reference :

Introduction to Cook's edition of Sidney's "Defense of Poesy."

II. HIS CONTEMPORARIES.

Compare with respect both to style and matter. Reasons for their failure to attain the perpetuity of Sidney's Defense.

Readings :

Webbe: Discourse of English Poetry Ed. Arber.
Puttenham: Art of English Poesy. Ed. Arber.

III. HIS SUCCESSORS.

It has been said that "the 'Defense of Poesy' has formed the staple of all the thousand and one des-

sertations on that art with which our magazines and reviews have teemed during the last twenty years." Read Shelley and Emerson on this subject, and state how they differ or agree in respect to —

1. The nature of the poetic faculty.
2. Definition of poetry.
3. Rhyme or melody as a factor in poetry.
4. Moral purpose in relation to art.
5. Poetry as a guide to virtuous action.

References :

Shelley : Defence of Poetry.

Emerson : Poetry and Imagination, in "Letters and Social Aims."

IV. SIDNEY'S STYLE.

Sidney's prose was a great advance upon that of any earlier writer. Do you notice any important differences from modern writing in the following particulars : —

1. Vocabulary.
2. Sentences.
3. Paragraphs.
4. Figures of speech.

TOPIC III.

FRANCIS BACON.

[Bacon's Essays. Ed. Anderson.]

I. VERBAL STUDY: OF RICHES (No. XXXIV)

1. Explain Bacon's use of the following words, and the difference between their Elizabethan and present meanings ; "conceit," "fruition," "donative," "proud riches," "abstract," "friarly," "audits,"

"mainly broke," "chopping of bargains," "value," "humors."

2. Compare the passage relating to usury with Bacon's own essay on the subject. (No. XLI.)

3. Explain the allusions to monopolies and their legal status under Elizabeth and James

4. Verify from Ecclesiastes and Proverbs, the quotations from Solomon.

II. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. "Of great riches there is no real use except in the distribution." Effect on society of vast accumulations in the hands of a few?

2. Great riches have "no solid use to the owner," The right view of wealth as a *trust* for the good of mankind?

3. "To guard adventures with certainties that may uphold losses" Illustration of this policy by one of Shakespeare's characters?

4. "Defer not charities till death." Wisdom of this advice, taking into consideration the ease with which wills are often broken?

TOPIC IV.

FRANCIS BACON.

I. OF YOUTH AND AGE (No. XLII.)

1. Compare the Elizabethan and modern use of the following words: "composition," "turned," "tract of years."

2. Study the phraseology and arrangement of sentences in this essay with a view to discovering the secret of its compactness and clearness of statement.

II. OF BEAUTY (No. XLIII.)

1. Meaning of "almost seen," "favor," "color," "decent and gracious," "if it light well."

2. Point out any instances where the extreme conciseness of the writing causes obscurity.

III. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. "Virtue is like a rich stone, best plain set." Your opinion of the truthfulness of the simile?

2. "Beauty is as summer fruits." Is this necessarily true, and if so, why?

3. Is the tendency to a dissolute youth and a premature old age greater among the beautiful than among the ill-favored?

TOPIC V.

FRANCIS BACON.

I. OF VICISSITUDES OF THINGS. (No. LVIII.)

1. Meaning of "superior globe," "fume," "toy," "fetching," "arietations," "philology" (as here used.)

2. Explain the allusions to "the three years' drought in the time of Elias," "the observation that Machiaeval hath," "Plato's great year."

3. Can you harmonize Bacon's statement concerning comets with his own system of induction?

4. Do you note any indications of a belief in astrology by Bacon?

5. Give illustrations of religions founded respectively in the three manners described by Bacon.

II. OF STUDIES (No. L.)

1. Give your interpretation of the following passages and discuss their principles. "to spend too much time in studies is sloth," "to use them too much for ornament

is affectation," "studies give forth directions too much at large."

2. *Cymini sectores* (dividers of cummin seeds). Modern equivalent of this phrase?

3. For wise advice to the student, can you find, in literature, ancient or modern, a better guide than this essay?

TOPIC VI.

FRANCIS BACON.

I. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL.

1. Bacon's only predecessor in the writing of essays was the Frenchman, Montaigne (1533-1592). Read some of Montaigne's essays, and say what effect, if any, the French writer may have had on Bacon?

2. Discuss Bacon's views of love, as given in his essay (No. X.) on that subject. Can you conceive that essay and the Shakespearian plays to have had a common authorship?

3. Bibliography of Bacon's essays during his lifetime.

4. Give some account of Bacon's other principal works.

5. Bacon's rank in the following directions: —

a. As an author,— powers and limitations.

b. As a scientist,— his attitude toward contemporary science.

c. As a philosopher.

d. As a statesman.

e. As a writer on religious subjects.

II. BIOGRAPHICAL.

1. There is no evidence of any acquaintance between the two great contemporaries, Bacon and Shakespeare. Probable explanation?

2. Sketch of Bacon's life and character.

References :

Church : Bacon, in "English Men of Letters Series."

Macaulay : Essay on Bacon.

Shaw : English Literature, pp. 77-95.

Whipple : Literature of the Age of Elizabeth.

TOPIC VII.

FORERUNNERS OF THE MODERN NEWSPAPER.

I. THE PAMPHLETS.

1. Narratives and euphuist tract-romances ; Green, Lodge, etc.

2. Personal and controversial tracts ; Nash, Harvey, etc.

3. Social and religious documents ; Dekker, Breton.

4. Criticism on governmental measures in political and ecclesiastical matters ; the Martin Marprelate controversy.

II. The News-Letters, — their writers and the nature of the contents ; method of circulation.

III. Newspapers supersede pamphlets and newsletters. Give some account of the first English weekly newspaper (1622) and its editor.

References :

Saintsbury : Elizabethan Literature, pp. 223-253.

Pebody : English Journalism, Chapter III.

Macaulay : History of England, Vol. I. Chap. III.

Chambers : Cyclopædia of English Literature, Vol. I. pp. 310, 311.

TOPIC VIII.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SURVEY OF ENGLISH
LITERATURE FROM 1500 TO 1625.

By common consent this period is recognized as the most brilliant in our literature. Besides its remarkable achievements in the drama, and in the works already studied, give some account of notable writers and writings in other departments as follows:—

1. Philology. Cheke.
2. Artistic theory and criticism. Ascham.
3. Narratives of travel and adventure. Hakluyt, Purchas.
4. History. Holinshed, More, Raleigh.
5. Theology. Hooker, Andrewes.
6. Romantic and fanciful fiction. Lyly, Sidney.
7. Poetry. Daniel, Drayton, Donne, Chapman.
8. Political Science. Buchanan, Raleigh, Elyot.
9. Giordano Bruno. His visit to England and his influence on the minds of the Fulke-Greville circle.
10. The authorized version of the Bible. This version and the plays of Shakespeare have been called "twin monuments, not merely of their own period, but of the perfection of English." Discuss that statement, and show how "the men and the moment combined" in the production of these works.

References :

Saintsbury : Elizabethan Literature, Chaps. II. IV. VI.
Thos. Arnold : English Literature, Chapter IV.
Minto : Manual of English Prose.

TOPIC IX.

SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE ELIZABETHAN AGE.

I. FOREIGN INFLUENCES.

1. Previous to the accession of Elizabeth, the language had assumed no definiteness of form. Various influences now began to tell in fixing its idioms and construction. Discuss the respective force of these, as follows:—

- a.* Latin. As a subject of scholarly study; its colloquial and familiar use.
- b.* Italy. The resort of travelled Englishmen, and its service in furnishing models both in prose and verse.
- c.* Spain. Political causes which tended to bring about familiarity with its language and literature.
- d.* Germany. Subject-matter furnished by Germany, as the Faust-legend, etc. (See Herford's *Literary Relations of England and Germany in the Sixteenth Century*.)

II. DOMESTIC INFLUENCES.

1. Transition from Catholicism to Protestantism; effect of the new freedom from ecclesiastical control and from rigid scholasticism on the progress of thought.

2. Introduction of the printing-press, and the effect on the masses of the cheapening and multiplying of books.

3. Peace policy of Elizabeth; effect of the firmly settled state of the country on literary production.

4. New outlets of commerce; increase of wealth and leisure in its relation to both readers and writers.

5. Rise of the "Fourth Estate."

References :

Green : Short History of the English People, Chapter VII. Sec. 5.

Goadby : The England of Shakespeare.

Saintsbury : Elizabethan Literature, pp. 445-450.

TOPIC X.

JOHN MILTON.

[Areopagitica. Ed. Hales.]

I. DIRECT STUDY : AREOPAGITICA.

1. Significance of the title and motto from Euripides.
2. Make a topical analysis of the main lines of Milton's discussion and the arguments in support of each.
3. What distinguishes this so-called "speech," designed to be read, from one intended to be delivered personally to those to whom it is addressed?
4. Do you discover any more inclusive purpose than merely to discuss the direct question in hand?
5. Note the allusions and illustrations which reveal Milton's personal traits : —
 - a.* His intensity of feeling on the question of human liberty in all directions.
 - b.* His vast knowledge, winning for him the title of "learned" in an age of learned men.
 - c.* His fondness for Greece and Greek literature.
 - d.* His delight in mythology.
6. Discuss Milton's statement that "the knowledge and survey of vice is in this world necessary to the constituting human virtue." Can you offer arguments to the contrary?

7. Milton has been called "the last great writer in the old periodic style." Describe the characteristics of this "periodic style." Do you find it obscure?

8. Reasons for the greater hold of this essay on posterity than is the case with the numerous other prose writings of Milton.

II. BIOGRAPHICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL.

1. Date of the publication of the "Areopagitica," and history of parliamentary action preceding it.

2. Milton's personal reasons for coming forward as the champion of Unlicensed Printing.

3. Influence of the "Areopagitica" on —

a. The printing-press and its history.

b. Public sentiment.

c. Later writers.

d. Free thought.

TOPIC XI.

JOHN DRYDEN.

[Essay of Dramatic Poesy. Ed. Thos. Arnold.]

DIRECT STUDY: ESSAY OF DRAMATIC POESY

1. This was the first attempt in English to lay down any canons of dramatic writing. Make a summary of the five critical questions herein discussed, and the arguments advanced by the different speakers in support of their respective opinions.

2. Discuss these points in the light of nineteenth century practices and opinions, especially with regard to —

a. The value of rhyme in dramatic poetry; is its absence from the ancient drama an adequate reason for its disuse by moderns?

- b.* Blank verse; does its employment by Shakespeare prove its superior fitness for dramatic purposes? Can you cite any facts that would indicate that he succeeded *in spite of* blank verse, rather than because of it?
 - c.* Aristotle's judgment that the proper instrument for tragedy is that "nearest to common discourse." Effect of the application of this theory in the absence of striking story and lofty thoughts. Exclusive of Shakespeare's plays, can you name any notable instances of plays in blank verse that hold the modern stage?
 - d.* French plays on the English stage. How do present facts correspond with Dryden's prophesy?
3. Do you accept Dryden's opinion that "not only shall we never equal them [the sixteenth century dramatists], but they could never equal themselves were they to rise and write again"?
4. Arnold calls this Essay "the first piece of good modern English prose on which our literature can pride itself." Discuss that statement, and compare this writing with your preceding studies in this course. What new traits appear in this?

TOPIC XII

JOHN DRYDEN.

[Essays of Dryden. Ed. Yonge.]

I DIRECT STUDY: ESSAY ON SATIRE.

1. Most of Dryden's prose was written by way of preface to his plays or poems. Notwithstanding, these prefaces were —

"Merely writ at first for filling,
To raise the volume's price a shilling,"

they were pioneers in the art of literary criticism; what rank do you give to this "Essay on Satire," considering that it is the earliest discussion of the subject in English?

2. Discuss the fulsome strain of adulation which introduces and pervades this Essay, in common with most of Dryden's writing. What does it indicate with reference to the social position of men of letters in general, and Dryden's relations to the Earl of Dorset in particular?

3. Compare Dryden's remarks on Shakespeare, both here and in the "Essay of Dramatic Poesy," with the general opinion at that time, and say what evidence they furnish of his superior critical sense.

4. Discuss his opinions concerning —

a. Milton; that "his subject is not that of an heroic poem, properly so-called;" that "rhyme was not his talent."

b. The Old Testament as an unworked quarry of material for heroic poetry.

c. The qualifications necessary to the epic poet.

d. The superiority of epic to dramatic poetry.

5. Make a brief summary of Dryden's principles for the composition of the satire.

6. What state of society furnishes the most congenial field for satire?

II. BIOGRAPHICAL.

1. Dryden's position among his contemporaries; the group at Will's Coffee-House.

2. Dryden's indebtedness to Archbishop Tillotson, according to his own confession.

3. Dryden's indebtedness to the French, and especially to Corneille, in his manner of analysis as a critic. A new feature in English literature.

TOPIC XIII.

HISTORICAL SURVEY OF ENGLAND DURING
THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

I. ECCLESIASTICAL SITUATION.

1. Demands for reform ; the Puritans.
2. Archbishop Laud and the High Commission Court.
3. The Star Chamber, and its decrees in relation to all opponents of church liturgy and ceremonies.

II. POLITICAL SITUATION.

1. Levies of ship-money ; stretches of the royal prerogative.
2. Meeting of the Long Parliament.
3. Civil War ; the Independents and their doctrine of toleration. General attitude of the poets and men of letters in the early part of the struggle, with the one notable exception among the poets.
4. Milton's services "overplied in liberty's defense."
5. The Restoration (1660) ; return of the courtiers, wits, and poets, from exile abroad ; the Puritans silenced ; re-opening of the theatres.
6. James II. ; the Revolution.
7. The Toleration Act.

III. Relation of the course of events to the development of ideas as expressed in literature during the same period, whether as studied in the foregoing lessons or in other less notable names.

References :

Green : Short History of the English People, Chapter VIII.

Taine : English Literature, Book III., Chaps. 1, 2, 3.

Macaulay : Closing pages of "Essay on Milton."

TOPIC XIV.

RICHARD STEELE, AND THE RISE OF THE PERIODICAL MISCELLANY.

[The *Tatler*. Ed. The British Essayists.]

I. Steele has been called the originator of the social element in English literature. Read *Tatler*, No. 1, for an account of the design of the new journal. In what respects does it differ from any predecessor? (Compare Topic VII.)

II. Give an account of some conditions of English society particularly favorable to the success of the new venture; fitness of its projector, Richard Steele, for the work; source of the *nom de plume*, Isaac Bickerstaff. Read *Tatler*, No. 181, for its autobiographic interest.

III. The *Tatler* as a critic of contemporary manners and taste:—

1. Nos. 81, 99, 182. Dramatic taste and customs.
2. Nos. 25, 26, 28, 29, 38, 39. Duelling.
3. Nos. 169, 240. Drinking.

IV. The *Tatler* as a literary critic. Nos. 6, 47, 98, 106, 137, 177, 178.

V. For what reasons ought women to hold Steele in special remembrance,—not only of his general attitude compared with previous writers, but because of that finest of all tributes to one woman. (See *Tatler*, No. 49.)

VI. Recently there is a notable tendency toward greater appreciation of Steele, for it has been proved that both Macaulay (Essay on Addison), and Thackeray (English Humorists) have exaggerated the extent of Addison's patronage. Your own opinion of the *Tatler's* place in literature, taking into account the large share the periodical has come to take in modern literature?

VII. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

Thackeray: English Humorists.

Tuckerman: Essay on Steele in "Characteristics of Literature." Second Series.

Courthope: Chapter V. of Addison, in "English Men of Letters Series."

TOPIC XV.

JOSEPH ADDISON AND THE SPECTATOR.

[The *Spectator*. Ed. The British Essayists.]

I. The *Spectator* as a social reformer, in a time when "wit had been led astray by profligacy and virtue by fanaticism": —

1. Nos. 201, 207. On Devotion.
2. No. 391. On Prayer.
3. No. 465. On Faith.
4. No. 575. On Temporal and Eternal Happiness.

II. The *Spectator* as a political reformer: —

1. No. 125. Evils of party system.
2. No. 507. Foolishness of party-writing.

III. Addison as a literary critic: —

1. Nos. 58, 63 inclusive. Difference between true and false wit.
2. Nos. 411, 421, inclusive. Pleasures of the imagination.
3. Nos. 267 and seventeen Saturdays following. Milton.

IV. Do you agree with Macaulay that "the least valuable of Addison's contributions to the *Spectator* are his critical papers"?

V. Comparing the essays of Addison and Steele, associates in both the *Tatler* and the *Spectator*, do you

agree with Macaulay that "Addison's worst essay is as good as the best essay of any of his coadjutors"?

VI. Do you think Addison entitled to the reputation he coveted (No. 10), and that we can say truly that "he brought Philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell at clubs, tea-tables," etc.?

VII. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

Courthope: Addison, in "English Men of Letters Series."

Macaulay: Essay on Addison.

Johnson: Life of Addison.

TOPIC XVI.

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

[Essays of Dr. Johnson Ed. Hill.]

I. DIRECT STUDY: THE "RAMBLER."

1. After the death of Addison, the daily miscellany passed by degrees into inferior hands, became insufferably dull, and finally died altogether. The most successful revival was made in 1752, by Dr. Johnson in the *Rambler*. Read any half dozen numbers (for example, Nos. 9, 47, 58, 68, 121, 137), and give your opinion of Dr. Johnson as an essayist and moral teacher in comparison with either Steele or Addison.

2. It is to be remembered that Johnson was compiling his dictionary during these years of the appearance of the *Rambler*. What effect may this task have had on the style of these papers?

3. Read the last *Rambler* (208) for an account of his own ideals and methods, and say how far he was successful in his own ambition as therein stated.

II. DIRECT STUDY: THE LIVES OF THE POETS.

[The Six Chief Lives. Ed. M. Arnold.]

1. What opinion do these give you of Johnson's critical powers? A modern critic praising this work, in parts, for its "ingenious, solid, and acute observation," "noble moral lessons," "manly tone of writing and thinking," yet adds, that, in other parts, Johnson is "like a deaf man seated at a symphony of Beethoven,—a sense is wanting in him." Do you discover any such lack; if so, what?

2. What differences in style do you note between this work and the *Rambler*? Which do you prefer?

3. Professor Earle says, "Of all models from which the spirit of genuine true and wholesome diction is to be imbibed, Samuel Johnson is the one author unapproachably and incomparably the best." Your own impressions?

III. The time when Johnson began writing in London has been aptly compared to "a dark night between two sunny days." Describe the literary situation from which this figure derives its force.

IV. It has been said of Johnson that "the memory of other authors is kept alive by their works; but the memory of Johnson keeps many of his works alive." Explain this anomaly. (See Boswell's Life of Johnson.)

V. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

Carlyle: Essay on Boswell's Life of Johnson; also, The Hero as Man of Letters.

Macaulay: Essay on Johnson; also on Croker's edition of Boswell's Life.

Leslie Stephen: Johnson, in "English Men of Letters Series."

TOPIC XVII.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

[Essays of Goldsmith. Ed. Yonge.]

I. DIRECT STUDY: ON THE ORIGIN OF POETRY. POETRY DISTINGUISHED FROM OTHER WRITINGS.

1. Discuss Goldsmith's antithesis between poetry and eloquence.

2. Enumerate the several points of Goldsmith's differentiation of poetry from other writings.

3. Do any or all of these succeed in explaining the indefinable somewhat known as the poetic imagination?

4. Do you agree with Goldsmith in justifying a translator for deviating from the original, providing it be "at the same time an improvement"?

5. How do these essays compare, both as to matter and style, with preceding critical essays on the poetic art?

II. DIRECT STUDY: THE CHINESE LETTERS.

1. What characteristics of these letters entitle them to the place they have taken among the classics of the century?

2. Can you name any other satirical compositions so free from bitterness and ill-nature as these?

3. Resemblances between the "Man in Black" and Goldsmith himself?

4. Previous conceptions similar to the "Chinese philosopher" among foreign writers?

III. Compare the *Bee* with the *Rambler* for literary style, and as representatives of different types of periodical essay writing.

IV. What do you consider the leading characteristics of Goldsmith's prose style? Does Johnson's epitaph, "He touched nothing which he did not adorn," seem excessive praise?

V. BIOGRAPHICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL.

1. Thackeray speaks of Goldsmith as "the most beloved of English writers." Some reasons for such a place in men's hearts?

2. Give some account of "The Club" (still flourishing as "The Literary Club") of which Johnson and Goldsmith were such noted members.

VI. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

Macaulay: Essay on Goldsmith.

Thackeray: English Humorists.

Stanhope: History of England, VI. 478.

TOPIC XVIII.

GENERAL LITERARY SURVEY OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

I. From the foregoing studies (XIV. et seq.), what basis do you find for the titles "the Augustan age," "classic age," etc., as applied to this period?

II. What basis for the phrase "eighteenth century reserve"?

III. Describe the social atmosphere which constituted *The Town*, and its effect upon literature.

IV. Discuss some of the most notable features of eighteenth century literature, as:—

1. Continuity of metaphysical speculation from Locke onward.

2. Rise of journalism as a literary profession.

3. Evolution of the modern novel from the expiring schools of comedy.

4. Gradual return to an observation of Nature.
5. Dawning of a taste for Gothic romance.
6. New mastery of prose as a medium of expression, and cultivation of prose writing by literary leaders.

References :

Gosse : Concluding Chapter of Eighteenth Century Literature.

Shaw : English Literature, p. 209.

Thackeray : English Humorists.

TOPIC XIX.

THE RISE OF BOOK-REVIEWING.

The beginning of our modern system of book-reviewing dates from the establishment of the *Edinburgh Review* (1802). Give some account of the three men by whom it was established : —

I. FRANCIS JEFFREY.

1. Read his reviews of Wordsworth's "Excursion," "The White Doe of Rylstone," since Jeffrey's name is chiefly perpetuated by these and other "master-pieces of impertinence." What do these criticisms reveal of his own character, and of his lack of sympathetic insight into a mind of a different order ?

2. What does his biography reveal concerning his personal traits, and are these of a kind that would fit him to judge of such contemporaries as Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Lamb ?

3. He was a master of the arts of ridicule, as seen by consultation with the original articles in the *Edinburgh Review*. (He refused, however, to include the most striking specimens when republished in book form.) Is ridicule one of the higher critical weapons ?

4. Reading these productions after the lapse of three-quarters of a century, what impresses you as the object of Jeffrey's reviews, — to give a fair estimate of the author in hand, or to make a striking exhibition of his own brilliancy and acuteness?

II. SYDNEY SMITH.

1. Read some of his essays and say how they compare for weight and permanence with Jeffrey's writing.

2. Sydney Smith was the most aggressive and the most personal of these early reviewers. Instead of following the example of Goldsmith and Addison by ridiculing imaginary types, he held up to scorn living men and assailed existing institutions. What place ought personalities to hold in criticism?

III. LORD BROUGHAM.

Give some account of his part in the new enterprise.

References :

Leslie Stephen : *The First Edinburgh Reviewers*, in "Hours in a Library." Third Series.

Whipple : *British Critics*, in "Essays and Reviews," Vol. II.

Bagehot : *The First Edinburgh Reviewers*, in "Literary Studies," Vol. I.

Coleridge : *Biographia Literaria*, Chapter XXI.

TOPIC XX.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

BIOGRAPHIA LITERARIA, CHAPTERS XIV. XV. XVI

This work forms an epoch in the history of criticism, being the first serious attempt in the language to estab-

lish some fixed canons based on the principles of human nature, in distinction from the criticism of arbitrary dictation and individual authority as practised by the *Edinburgh Review*.

I. CHAPTER XIV.

1. Discuss this chapter and give your opinion on the following points:—

- a. The definition of a poem. Does this in truth discriminate the poem from all other species of composition,—fiction for example? On the other hand, can you cite instances of poems which would be excluded from the list by the requirements here laid down?
- b. No poem either can or ought to be all poetry. Is the reason therefor valid?
- c. The nature of the poetic imagination and its *fusing* power. Do you accept the relations here assigned to Good Sense, Fancy, Motion, and Imagination?

II. CHAPTER XV.

1. Discuss the distinctions here made between the specific symptoms of poetic power and general talent turned to poetical composition by accidental motives.

- a. The sense of music in the soul. Do you agree that this may be cultivated but never can be learned? Mention any great poets not uniformly distinguished for melody.
- b. *Aloofness* from the poet's own personal sensations and experiences. Exclusive of dramatic poetry, do you regard self-revelation as a defect in poetry?
- c. Poetical methods of dealing with Nature. Compare with Ruskin's "pathetic fallacy."

- d. The intimate relations of philosophy and poetry.
Do you accept the statement that "no man was ever yet a great poet without being at the same time a profound philosopher"?

III. CHAPTER XVI.

Give a summary of the striking points of difference here enumerated between the poets of Coleridge's time and those of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

TOPIC XXI.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

BIOGRAPHIA LITERARIA, CHAPTERS XVII., XVIII.

I. CHAPTER XVII.

If possible, Wordsworth's Preface to the "Lyrical Ballads" (ed. 1800) should be read in connection with this chapter. Unfortunately, it is seldom included in modern editions of the poet, although from it dates the whole of that still unsettled controversy respecting the relations of prose and poetry. If this preface is not obtainable, state its principal tenets, as here summarized by Coleridge.

II. CHAPTER XVIII.

Discuss Coleridge's arguments for the essential differences between prose and poetry in the following respects :—

1. The origin of metre ; reasons inherent therein for the employment of picturesque language.
2. The effects of metre ; demand for a correspondence between matter and form.
3. The strong mental excitement attendant upon poetical composition.

4. The impulse toward unity attendant upon the high spiritual instinct of humanity.

5. The practice of the best poets in all countries. Cite instances in illustration of this point.

III. Surveying the question, after this consideration of the arguments on both sides, with which do you agree, — Wordsworth or Coleridge?

IV. COMPARATIVE STUDY.

Give any notable expressions from modern writers on this question, — whether the difference between prose and poetry is one of *logic*, or is merely an accidental difference of *form*.

References :

M. Arnold : Preface to his edition of Johnson's "Lives of the Poets."

Earle : English Prose, Chapter V

Masson : Introduction to De Quincey's "English Mail Coach," in Select Essays of De Quincey.

V. BIOGRAPHICAL.

Give some account of the strange change in Coleridge's powers of mind, which took place between 1798 and 1804, and which turned him from poetry to philosophy and criticism. Do you accept Lowell's explanation that "his critical sense rose like a forbidding apparition in the path of his poetic production"? Does not Coleridge's ode "Dejection," carry within itself its own contradiction as a dirge over his dead imagination?

Reference :

Traill : Coleridge, in "English Men of Letters Series."

TOPIC XXII.

WILLIAM HAZLITT.

[Hazlitt, *Essayist and Critic*. Ed. Ireland.]

I. DIRECT STUDY: LITERATURE OF THE AGE OF ELIZABETH.

1. Make an analysis of this essay. In orderliness and directness of outline how does it compare with Coleridge's writing?

2. All of the prose writers of this period, Lamb, Hazlitt, De Quincey, and others, regarded Coleridge as their master. What traces of Coleridge's principles of criticism mark Hazlitt's treatment of this subject?

3. Hazlitt's discussions of "causes" as an interpretation of an intellectual situation was quite new in literature. What features of modern knowledge have tended to increase the popularity of the discussion of "environment" as a factor in literary development?

4. Point out the passages which indicate Hazlitt's possession of two of the most desirable critical qualities, — sympathetic insight and philosophic grasp.

II. DIRECT STUDY: MY FIRST ACQUAINTANCE WITH POETS; CHARLES LAMB'S EVENINGS; A FAREWELL TO ESSAY WRITING; ON LIVING TO ONESELF.

1. Hazlitt, though shy with his friends, is one of the most autobiographical of writers. In these essays, what insight do you get into his own individual experiences, hopes, aspirations, and disappointments?

2. Discuss Hazlitt's literary style. Does it hold your attention? If so, analyze the sources of its power.

3. Do you consider Hazlitt's fondness for quotation carried to such an extent as to be objectionable; or do you regard it as a merit, by reason of the skill with which it is employed?

4. Talfourd said of Hazlitt, "He had as passionate a desire for truth as others have for wealth or power or fame." What evidences of this in his analytic and searching discussions of his friends as well as his enemies?

III. BIOGRAPHICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL.

The writings of Hazlitt fill thirty-five volumes, and deal with a very wide range of subjects, — painting, poetry, prose, plays, politics, parliamentary speeches, books, men and things. Give some account of his education and habits of life that fitted him to deal with such various themes.

References:

Patmore: Personal Recollections of Hazlitt and Others.

Tuckerman: Characteristics of Literature. Second Series.

Lord Lytton: Introduction to "Hazlitt's Literary Remains."

TOPIC XXIII.

THOMAS DE QUINCEY.

I. DIRECT STUDY: SHAKESPEARE.

1. *Thought.*

- a. Make an analysis of this essay, and say what rank you give to it for the importance of its topics and its progression of ideas.

- b.* Masson speaks of this essay as "somewhat thin, but deserving notice for the perfection of its proportions, as a summary of what is essential to our information respecting Shakespeare's life." Do you consider that the noteworthy qualities of this essay are rightly indicated in this verdict? If not, name others.
- c.* Cite the evidences of De Quincey's wide knowledge of books and men.
- d.* Discuss his appraisal of the respective merits of Shakespeare and the Greek dramatists. What qualifications had De Quincey for this undertaking, entitling him to our deference?
- e.* Cite the evidences of De Quincey's sense of humor.
- f.* Cite the evidences of his sensibility to the sublime; of his interest in the characters, thoughts, and affections of human nature.

2. *Style.*

- a.* De Quincey is generally recognized as the most eminent of modern masters of what is known as the "periodic style" of writing. Define the characteristics of this style, and discuss its merits and defects as a form of expression. (Consult Campbell, Bain, Minto, and other writers on rhetoric.) Select examples from the present essay.
- b.* Discuss the long sentence beginning, "After this review of Shakespeare's life," etc. Can you re-cast this to make it more simple, without any loss of eloquence or dignity?

II. BIOGRAPHICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL.

- 1. All the important writings of De Quincey made their first appearance in magazines or serial publications

What relation may this fact be supposed to have had both upon the kind and the amount of his literary production?

2. Give some account of De Quincey's life and of his equipment both by Nature and by education for the literary calling.

III. GENERAL LITERARY ESTIMATE.

Masson: De Quincey, in "English men of Letters Series."

Minto: Manual of English Prose, pp. 31-76.

Harriet Martineau: Biographical Sketches.

TOPIC XXIV.

THOMAS MACAULAY.

I. DIRECT STUDY: ESSAY ON LORD CLIVE.

1. *Thought*. Make an analysis, showing the main outlines of the essay, the logical connection of the statements, and the object in view.

2. *Illustrations and Allusions*. Make a note of the most striking examples of Macaulay's use of these elements, and show what evidence these give of the quality of his mind and the range of his reading.

3. *Style*. Of all modern writers, Macaulay is the one commonly preferred by teachers of the art of composition for the illustration of desirable qualities of style. Note his characteristics in the following respects:—

a. *Vocabulary*. Cite passages to show his command of expression, and his power of repeating a thought in several different forms.

b. *Use of antithesis in the structure of his sentences*. Do you discover any tendency to sacrifice truth for the sake of a telling antithesis?

- c. Paragraphs. Earle says, "In the grouping and melodious run of his paragraphs, Macaulay seems to me *facile princeps* of all modern English writers." Do you agree with that statement, or does his occasional abruptness of transition from one subject to another detract from his merits in this respect?
- d. By common consent, Macaulay is rated as a master of the art of story-telling. Note the passages which show his power in this way.
- e. Macaulay's style approached much more nearly to spoken oratory than anything that had preceded it in essay-writing. Cite passages in illustration.

4. *Suggestiveness*. This is rightly ranked as the highest possible quality of an essay. Judging from this example, how would you rank Macaulay in this respect? Do you recall any original theory or delicate analysis associated with the name of Macaulay?

II. COLLATERAL READING.

1. Browning's poem, "Clive," deals with an episode alluded to in this essay. How do you rank the poem as to suggestiveness, compared with the essay?

TOPIC XXV.

THOMAS CARLYLE.

I. DIRECT STUDY: HEROES AND HERO-WORSHIP, LECTURE I.

- 1. Make an analysis of this essay, showing its progress of thought.
- 2. Discuss Carlyle's definition of great men: —
"leaders of men . . . creators of whatsoever the general

mass of men contrived to do or attain." Does this imply that *success* is a chief element in greatness? Can an unsuccessful man be also a great man, in your opinion?

3. Discuss the explanation which such a conception of greatness offers for some of Carlyle's favorite themes, — as Frederick the Great, the embodiment of mere personal force of will and genius; also his attitude toward America during the Civil War?

4. Discuss Carlyle's conception of the nature of History as thrice expressed here, — "History is the biography of great men." Compare with Herbert Spencer ("Progress, its Law and Cause"); with Lecky ("Rise of Rationalism," II. 384); with Guizot ("Shakespeare and his Times," p. 328).

II. COMPARATIVE STUDY.

1. Read Emerson's chapter, "Uses of Great Men" in *Representative Men*. What essential differences in the two writers with respect to definition, — Emerson placing the stress on the *thought* of the man, rather than his qualities as leader. Which seems to you to be most adequate?

2. Respective opinions of the two writers with regard to the masses. Relative importance of "energy" and "capacity" in your own judgment. Will any amount of industry or striving develop powers of *creation*?

3. In the scale of great men, what class is placed highest by both writers?

4. Comparing the two essays as a whole, which takes the wider range of thought? Which excels in illustration? Which is to you the more suggestive and stimulating?

5. Both agree as to the value of hero-worship to the human race. Is its force overstated by either?

TOPIC XXVI.

THOMAS CARLYLE.

I. DIRECT STUDY: HEROES AND HERO-WORSHIP,
LECTURE III.

1. Although Carlyle has denied (Lecture I.) that the time "calls forth" greatness, he is forced to admit that the great man derives his ascendancy from the fact that *he belongs to his time*. Do you accept this doctrine? Is there a basis of truth in the saying "born an age too soon"?

2. Do you accept the foundation idea here, — that the difference in men is more in degree than in kind? Does it seem inconsistent with previous utterances by Carlyle?

3. Do you accept Carlyle's statement concerning the Poet, that his first gift is "that he have intellect enough," and that having it, "he will be a Poet."

4. Discuss the theory that poetry comes only through experience, and especially through experiences of sorrow; that the poetic power avails to transmute the reverses and sorrows of life into a "joyful tranquillity."

II. COMPARATIVE STUDY:

1. Read Emerson's chapter, "Shakespeare; or the Poet," in *Representative Men*. Why do both take Shakespeare as the type of Poet?

2. Why do both dwell so little on the *form* of Shakespeare's literary utterance?

3. Shakespeare's perception of relativity, according to both writers. What rank do you give to this quality of mind, in life, as well as in art?

4. Granting that Shakespeare "only half uttered himself," was it because of the external reasons given by Carlyle, or the internal, given by Emerson?

5. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of having no "importunate topic." Is it not this that often converts an ordinary intellect into a great man, especially when it is some mighty moral thought?

6. Do you accept the statement that Shakespeare was "master of the revels to mankind," and that "the world still wants its poet-priest?"

TOPIC XXVII.

THOMAS CARLYLE.

I. DIRECT STUDY: HEROES AND HERO-WORSHIP, LECTURE V.

1. Make a topical analysis of this lecture.

2. Discuss Carlyle's choice of Johnson, Rousseau, and Burns, as types of men of letters. Do they not seem chosen rather because they possess his cardinal virtues, — industry, veracity, etc., — than because of their literary power?

3. Do these men seem to you heroes in any large sense of the word?

4. Do you agree with Carlyle in placing the responsibility of a writer's contemporary reputation on the *age*, rather than on the writer himself?

5. Does Carlyle seem to you to exaggerate the influence of his chosen heroes, and to suppress and under-rate the influence of their coadjutors?

6. In what qualities do you find the chief excellence of these lectures as essays on the subject of heroes, — in their power to analyze the elements of greatness, in their array of achievements in proof of greatness, or in their ingenuity in representing greatness under endless varieties of striking images?

II. DIRECT STUDY: HEROES AND HERO-WORSHIP LECTURE VI.

1. Make a topical analysis of this lecture.
2. Discuss Carlyle's ideal of Government, — an "able man" at the head of affairs, and capable, obedient officials under him through all degrees of importance. Is there anything in this plan that has not already been tried and found wanting? What uncontrollable forces make the realization impossible?
3. Do you agree with Carlyle that man's misery *always* comes from greatness?
4. In the matter of literary style is Carlyle a good model? Do you enjoy his coinage of new words? his nicknaming? his application of old terms to new situations? hyperbole? habit of interrogation, of apostrophe? irony?
5. What do you consider the most amiable feature of his preaching?
6. It has been said, "It is bad to be with Carlyle habitually;" on the other hand, many persons find in him their most satisfying mental food. Your own opinion?

TOPIC XXVIII.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

[Essays in Criticism.]

I. DIRECT STUDY: THE FUNCTION OF CRITICISM.

1. Make an analysis of this essay, showing its leading points and the progress of its thought.
2. Discuss certain of its propositions as follows: —
 - a. That for a master-work of literature two powers must concur, — the power of the man and the power of the moment. Cite any instances in proof either of the truth or the falsity of this.

- b.* That a poet is great just in proportion as he is wise in a knowledge of life and the world. If this be true, how shall we account for Burns? for Cowper?
- c.* That the one thing lacking to make Wordsworth an even greater poet than he was, lay in the fact that he did not know books well enough. Have not some poets been injured by too great knowledge of books?
- d.* That a time of true creative activity must inevitably be preceded by a time of criticism. Do you assent to this, or to Principal Shairp's opinion that "criticism may stifle but cannot evoke creation"?
- e.* That knowledge accompanied with his own judgment as companion and clew, must be the critic's great concern for himself. Matthew Arnold himself furnishes the best illustration of this principle, and by precept and practice may be said to have created a new epoch in criticism. Consult any of his essays in this volume as evidence.
- f.* Discuss the definition of criticism, — "a disinterested endeavor to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world." Can you offer a better, either original or quoted?
3. Cite the instances of felicity of expression,—phrases which have realized Mr. Arnold's ideal in "making the tour of the world."

II. COMPARATIVE STUDY.

1. Matthew Arnold is the recognized leader of a more scientific method than any that had preceded him in English criticism. What evidences of it in this essay?
2. What advance do you note on the "impressionist school" of Coleridge, Hazlitt, and De Quincey?

TOPIC XXIX.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

[Essays in Criticism. Second Series.]

I. DIRECT STUDY: WORDSWORTH.

1. Make an analysis of this essay by topics, with reference to the critic's canons of poetry rather than to their present application.

2. Discuss certain of its statements as follows:—

- a.* That poetry is nothing less than the most perfect speech of man,—the speech in which he comes nearest to being able to utter the truth.
- b.* That we cannot improve upon the Greeks in their classification of poetry.
- c.* That ballad poetry and didactic poetry are of the inferior orders.
- d.* That poetry is at bottom a criticism of life, and that Wordsworth's dealings with life mark his superiority.
- e.* That we demand something in our poetry which the ancient poets can never give.

II. DIRECT STUDY: BYRON.

1 Do the reasons given here seem adequate for the statement that hereafter Wordsworth and Byron will "stand out by themselves"?

2. In another essay (on Heine), Mr. Arnold has said, "To ascertain the master-current in the literature of an epoch, and to distinguish this from all minor currents, is one of the critic's highest functions." What "master-current" does he detect in this epoch, and are Wordsworth and Byron truly the best types of it?

3 In another essay (on Pagan and Mediæval Religious Sentiment), Mr. Arnold has said, "The great art of criticism is to get oneself out of the way and let humanity decide." Has he wholly avoided the personal equation in these essays, especially in his judgment of Shelley?

4. It was these two essays ("Wordsworth" and "Byron") written in his later years, that so aroused Mr. Swinburne's ire, and caused him to say, "It is annually becoming more difficult for the most devoted and sincere good-will to regard Mr. Arnold as a serious judge on questions of literature." Do you feel any loss of balance or calmness compared with the essay of the earlier time? (Topic XXVIII.)

TOPIC XXX.

ESSENTIALS OF LITERARY CRITICISM.

I. The history of the essay has shown a marked growth in literary criticism, both as to amount and merit. Discuss some of the requirements demanded of writers in this field, with illustrations chosen from those who have been best equipped in these several ways:

1. *Learning.* Importance of a knowledge of what has been previously done in a given field. Which class of writers, critical or creative, can best dispense with search and knowledge?

2. *Picturesqueness.* A man of information, however great, will fail as a critic unless he be also master of the arts of perspective, with power to exhibit "the quality of a man's mind and the amount of his literary performance." Effect of writing for periodicals on this power?

3. *Freedom from bias.* Compare present conditions with the days when it was said truthfully of the *Edinburgh Review*, that it was "prone to decide upon

the excellencies of a poet's images, or a rhetorician's style by the opinion he entertained of Mr. Pitt and the French Revolution."

4. *Insight.* A genuine literary critic will lead public opinion rather than follow it. Give some noted instances of discerning critics who have recognized young genius, and have compelled the appreciation of contemporaries; also instances of great blunders, and of the reversal of critical verdicts by the judgments of posterity.

5. *Sympathy.* Give the reasons why a quick sympathy and an active imagination are indispensable to the highest work in criticism, especially if dealing with a past age or a foreign language.

II. The future of literary criticism. What do you consider the most favorable signs of the times for the future? What the greatest obstacles toward the further improvement of this kind of writing?





AN AFTER WORD.

THE author's experience with private classes has shown that one of the first inquiries of those about to enter upon a course of study, especially when the student is without access to any large library, relates to the number and cost of the required books. To meet this want, the following Bibliography has been prepared, showing the price of volume and name of publisher of the principal works recommended in the foregoing pages. The object being to exhibit at a glance the few books which are most indispensable in each course of study, the list deals mainly with works which furnish the most conveniently accessible text of the writings, or with those which have special value as handbooks throughout the course. The books suggested under "References" or "General Literary Estimate" are not included, since others dealing

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